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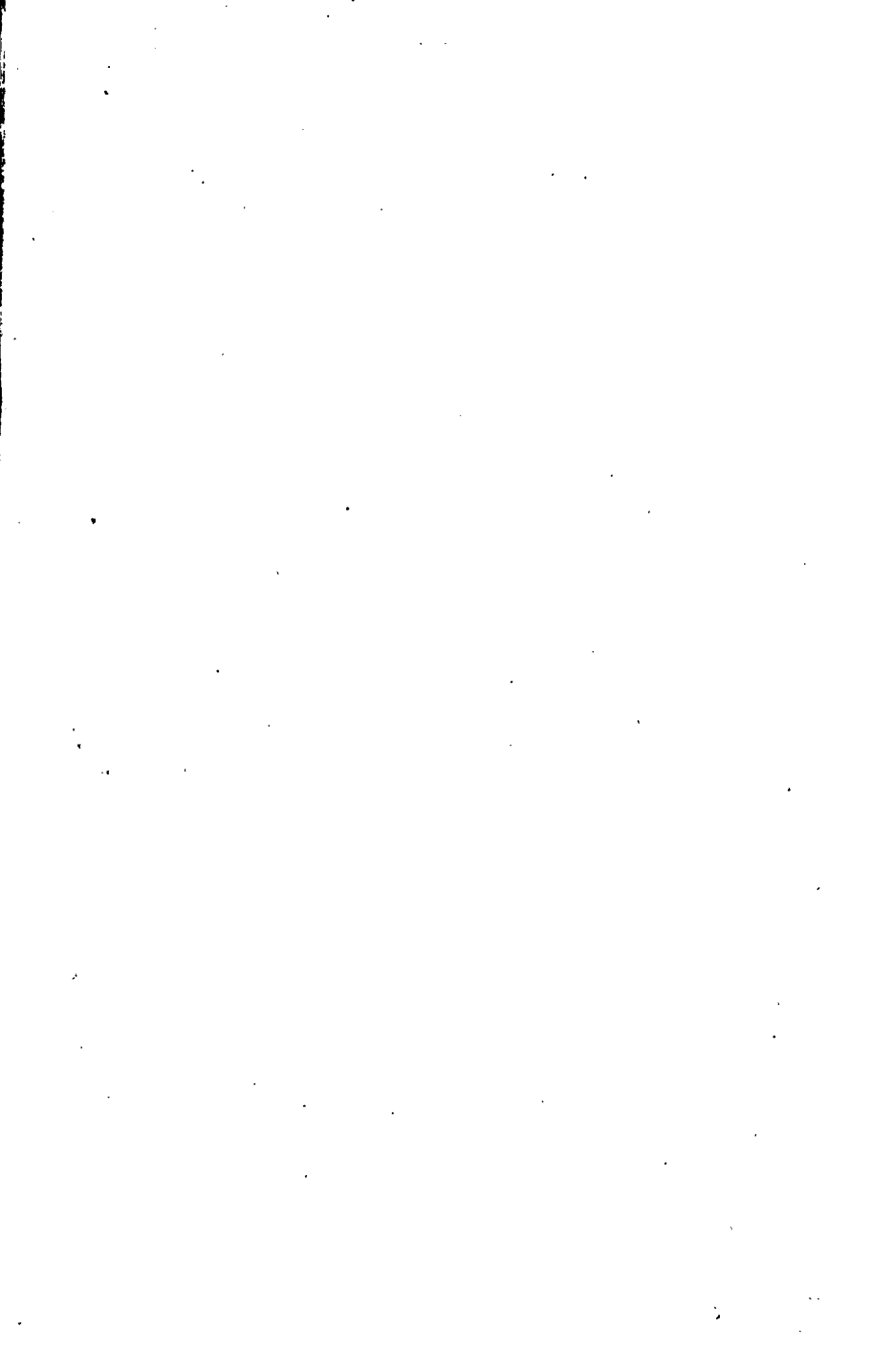
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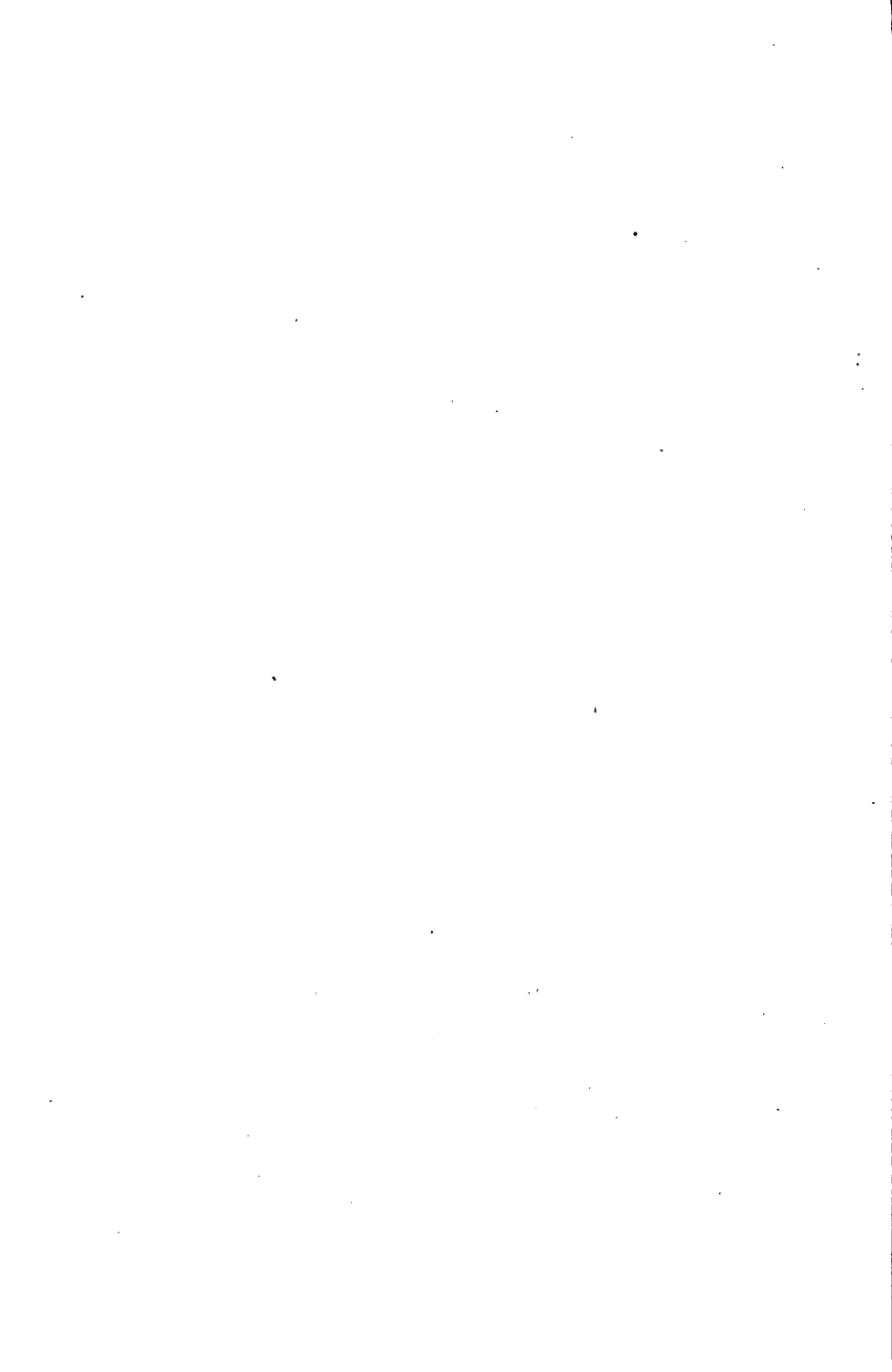
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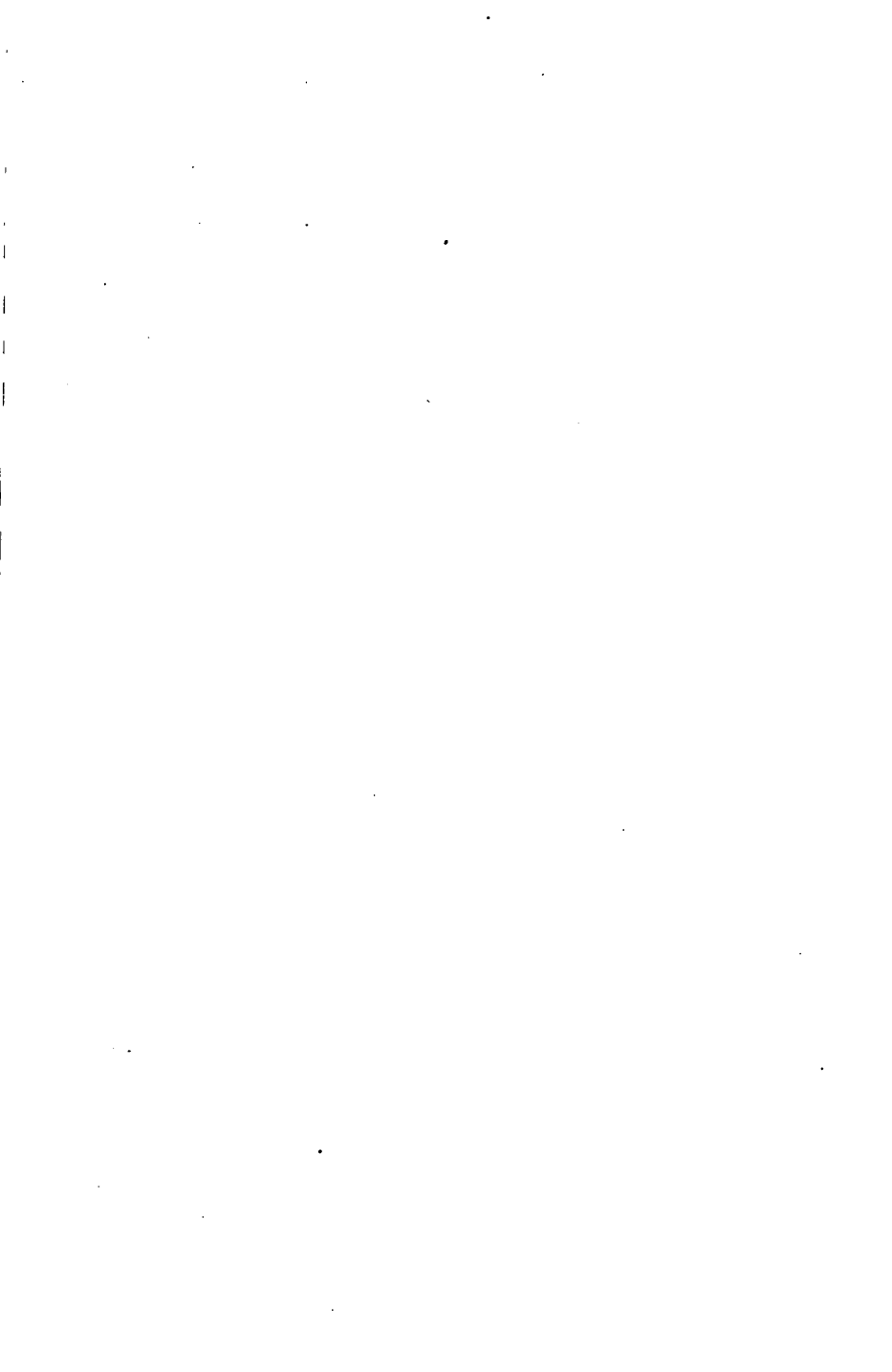
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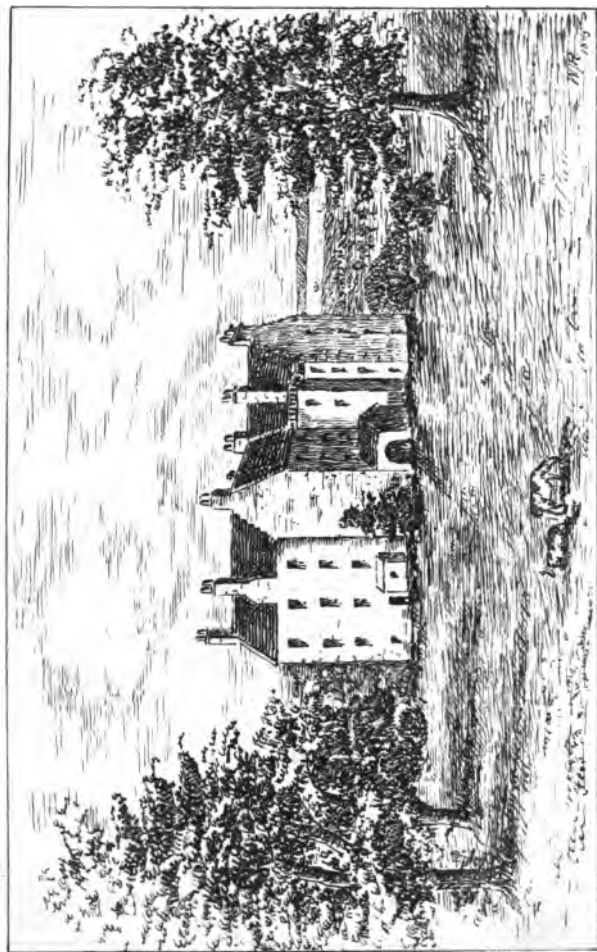




ANNALS OF COLINSBURGH







BALCARRES HOUSE ABOUT EARL COLIN'S TIME.

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ANNALS OF COLINSBURGH

WITH NOTES ON
CHURCH LIFE IN KILCONQUHAR PARISH

BY
REV. ROBERT DICK
COLINSBURGH

EDINBURGH
ANDREW ELLIOT, 17 PRINCES STREET
1896

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Alexander Cochrane*

P R E F A C E.

IN gathering materials for these Annals my first idea was only to trace the history of Colinsburgh, and I then thought that a pamphlet of forty or fifty pages would be sufficient; but as the subject was investigated the materials greatly increased and the story became more interesting. And besides, one can hardly write of Scotchmen two centuries ago without saying something of their religion, since that occupied so much of their thoughts and had so much to do in forming their character, and this led me to give some account of the church life of the parish. I have tried to tell the story with as few dry details as possible, so that it may be found interesting to the general reader; and I have spared no pains to obtain accurate information, having searched all the available original documents as well as much printed matter. The authorities are given in all cases where this seemed needful.

I am specially indebted to the Right Honourable the Earl of Crawford for the ready access he so kindly gave me to the historical treasures at Haigh Hall, and only in a lesser degree to his obliging librarian, Mr J. P.

Edmond. My thanks are also due to the Rev. Alexander Legge for permitting me to examine the old registers of his kirk-session; to Dr Dickson, of the Historical department in the Register House, Edinburgh; to the officials of the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh; to Mr W. T. Russell, Edinburgh, for the illustrations; and not least to Mr Flockhart and many friends in Colinsburgh, who have allowed me to look over the titles of their houses, and have favoured me with many facts and reminiscences.

COLINSBURGH,

April 1896.

CONTENTS.

	Page
CHAPTER I.—NETHER RIRES.	
Situation of Colinsburgh—The Betons—Nether Rires Lands Agricultural—Small Population—Town first feued in 1682—Earliest Feuars—Named Colinsburgh in 1686.	9
CHAPTER II.—THE EARLY INHABITANTS.	
Early Charters and Houses—Price of Feus—Sandyfield—Orphan Child—King's Cadger—Village Characters, Bellmen—Schools and Teachers—Opposition to Popery—Centenarians—Jacobite Rebellions—Weather Notices.	20
CHAPTER III.—THE FOUNDER.	
Lord Menmuir—Balcarres House—Farm Rents—The Old Chapel—Earl Colin's Birth—His Father and Brother—Presented at Court—His Marriages—A Jacobite—In Exile—His Death.	41
CHAPTER IV.—THE BURGH OF BARONY.	
Formed in 1686—Fairs and Markets—Courts and Bailies of Barony—The Tolbooth—Bloodweits—The Gally Law—Curfew Bell.	53
CHAPTER V.—THE PARISH MINISTERS.	
Roman Catholic Clergy—Spens—Leslie—Moncrieff—Rutherford—Carmichael—Rollock—Munro—Forret—Hay—Drummond—Wilson—Aytone—Clidesdale—Chalmers—Small—Ferrie—Milligan—Flint—Irvine—Legge.	65
CHAPTER VI.—THE KIRK SESSION.	
Minutes and Clerks—Church Services and Communions—Cups and Tokens—Absence from Kirk—Collections—Care of the Poor—Beggar's Badges—Education and Teachers.	88
CHAPTER VII.—CHURCH DISCIPLINE.	
Severity—Sabbath Breaking—Tippling—Scolding and Flyting—Witchcraft—Public Rebukes—Repentance Stool—The Jougs and Stocks—Corporal Punishment—Contumacy.	104
CHAPTER VIII.—THE COVENANTERS.	
Swearing of Covenants—Drummond in Bass Rock—Pitiloch and Hay Executed—Philip Escaped—Archbishop Sharp—The Hendersons and Fleming—Fines—Field Preaching.	120

CHAPTER IX.—THE U.P. CHURCH.

Origin—Church Built—First Relief Presbytery—Stipends—Communions
 —Clerks and Precentors—The Poor—Discipline—Money Lent—Education—
 Controversy—Split in Congregation—The East Church. 135

CHAPTER X.—THE DISSENTING MINISTERS.

Colier—Cowan—Paton—Scott—Jamieson—Reid—Russell—Turnbull—
 Marshall—Cumming—Dickie—Jackson—Johnstone—Dick—Barnyards, Dick
 —Kennedy. 161

CHAPTER XI.—LATER DAYS.

Demonstrations—John Scott—James Thomson—"Bonnie Colinsburgh"—
 Gas, Water, and Drainage—Agricultural Society—Volunteers—Social Meet-
 ing—Flower Shows—Curling Clubs—Lady Curlers—Gardener's Hall—Town
 Hall. 175

ANNALS OF COLINSBURGH.

CHAPTER I.

Hether Rires.

THE records of the past have always an interest to the men and women of the present. Apart altogether from antiquarian tastes, every one likes to know something of the place in which he was born or the district in which he lives. Changes are ever taking place, improvements are constantly being made, and each generation has its own characteristic features, so that in the course of two or three centuries a place is greatly changed from what it once was. Yet human nature is ever much the same, for life is a continuous stream, and the same passions and feelings which agitated the breasts of men long ago have their place in our hearts to-day. We are all influenced by those who have gone before us, though it may be unconsciously, and thus the story of the past helps to explain much of our life now.

Colinsburgh forms part of the parish of Kilconquhar in the east neuk of Fife, lying on the high road between Anstruther and Leven, about three miles north of the Frith of Forth at Elie. It is only a village, so far as population is concerned, but it is the shopping centre of the surrounding district, and may fitly be called a town, as it was always described in the old charters. It is comparatively modern, for it only goes back rather more than two hundred years, and thus its origin and progress can be traced with some degree of fulness and accuracy. If there be nothing specially remarkable in its history, it had at least its own share in the stirring events of former days, and the story may prove interesting to a wider circle than the present inhabitants.

The first few houses were called Nether Rires, having been built on the lands of that name, immediately after they were acquired by the Earl of Balcarres in 1681. They formed part of the hereditary possessions of the Earls of Fife, which included, besides other properties, Wester and Easter Rires, on the former of which the castle and the chapel of our lady of Rires stood, not far from the present farmhouse of Rires, now belonging to Balcarres; East Newton Rires, now part of the Elie estate; and West Newton Rires, now belonging to Charlton.

In the year 1498, Nether Rires was acquired by Sir David Beton, the Lord High Treasurer and Captain of Falkland Palace; and his descendants continued in possession of it for more than a century and a half. They were known as the Betons of Nether Rires and Creich, the latter property having been acquired about

1502. The last and seventh of the line, David Beton, left no issue, his four children having all died in their youth; and in 1660, before his death, he disposed Nether Rires to his nephew, James Beton, fiar of Balfour.¹ The new proprietor does not seem to have been wealthy, as few of the lairds of that troubled time were; for in 1668 he borrowed two thousand merks² from Stephen Tough, a skipper in Leven, paying him an annual interest of four score pounds, and giving him a bond over his lands of Coates and Nether Rires in security. In the following year he sold Nether Rires to Sir William Bruce of Balcaskie, afterwards of Lochlevin, architect to King Charles II., whose charter was sealed on 3rd March 1669. Sir William, however, did not retain it long, as he disposed it to Colin, the third Earl of Balcarres, and his heirs of entail, on the 19th February 1681, when it became a part of the Balcarres estate.

It was then entirely agricultural land, there being no village of any kind upon it. There was never any mansionhouse, although in a charter given in 1507 to John Beton, it was provided that he should build and maintain a sufficient mansion, with a court-yard, vaults, stables, garden and dovecote, but the intention was never carried out.

The description given in the instrument of sasine is as follows:—"All and hail the lands of Neather Rires, with houses, biggings, yairds, tofts, crofts, outsetts,

¹Wood's *East Neuk of Fife*, p. 123, in which full particulars of the Beton family will be found.

²This is Scots money. A merk was worth 13s 4d, or two-thirds of a pound Scots, which again was equivalent to 1s 8d sterling, but, of course, the purchasing power of money was very much greater then than it is now.

woods, milns, fishings, pairts, pendicles, annexes, connexes, dependencies, and all other pertinents, lying within the Sherifffdom of Fyfe."¹ The same deed gives what appears to be the annual value of the land, with its feu farms, kains, customs and casualties, as extending to six pounds Scots, with three score bolls of victual, of which forty were of meal and twenty of bear, along with twelve capons. These duties had been "disponed by King James the sixth to James Beaton of Creich and David Beaton, his son, because they had renounced their right to the office of the Stewartry of Fife and Captain of the Palace of Falkland, with the lands of Darnoch, conform to contract between the King and them, dated 15th September 1602."²

The lands were not of great extent. The eastern boundary was formed by the road coming down from Fairfield to Kilconquhar—all on the east of that line belonging to the original estate of Balcarres,³ and thus only the western half of Colinsburgh stands on what was once Nether Rires. It only extended as far west as Charlton and Balchrystie; and was bounded on the north by Balcarres and Rires, and marched on the south with the Kilconquhar and Elie estates. There were besides twenty-nine acres of land, now belonging to Balchrystie, which were sold to Mr Alexander Christie, by

¹Particular Register of Sasines for Fife, vol. 15, p. 466.

²Inventory of Title Deeds of Nether Rires, in Muniment Room, Haigh Hall.

³The mill belonging to Balcarres, where the gardener's house at Cairnie now stands, is called N. R. Mill in Bleau's Map of 1654; but it could not have been on Nether Rires lands, for in 1598 it was called "the Miln of Balcarhous," when William Whytt had it. In the Kirk session records, Alexander Whyt, Nether Rires Miln, is mentioned as one of the elders, but in 1643 and afterwards he is described as in Balcarres Mill.

Alexander, Earl of Balcarres in 1791. They were then divided into two parks of about equal size, and were let at about forty-five shillings an acre. The advertisement published at the time of the sale describes them as substantially enclosed with stone dykes, and says, "These lands are of a remarkable fine soil, beautifully situated on a gentle eminence a little to the westward of Colinsburgh, and have a most commanding view of the Frith and country round. The turnpike road to Pittenweem goes along them, and a post passes daily, they are near several fishing towns, fuel, and markets for all kinds of provisions, and afford one of the finest situations for a villa that can be found in Scotland."¹

There is a tradition that at one time Nether Rires consisted only of a roadside public-house and a smithy, which implies that these were the only two houses standing together, the rest of the land being occupied by small farmers and crofters. The land was let out in tofts or pendicles, each tenant working his own bit of ground with the help of his family, or with occasional extra labour at the harvest and other busy seasons.

I have not been able to learn definitely where that first public-house stood, but probably it was where that of Henry Robertson's now stands, a site convenient for travellers between Kilconquhar and Largoward—or "the moors," as that part of the parish was then called, as well as for those going east and west along the main road. In 1647 there were four alehouses, or "brewster-houses" in the parish, besides those in the village of Kilconquhar; and one of these was kept by Margaret

¹Papers in Muniment Room, Haigh Hall.

Tailyour in Nether Rires. Her husband's name was Dishington, but she continued to be known by her maiden name, as was the common practice at that time and for long after. The kirk-session, among their other duties, had to do with the regulation of the drink traffic, and in that year they summoned all the brewsters to appear before them, and admonished them not to sell any drink on the Sabbath days, except so much as served for refreshment, or to those who should send for it to their own houses; and this Margaret Tailyour is mentioned among them. And in 1680, John Dishington, Nether Rires, paid £6 13s 4d Scots to the session for liberty to erect a headstone on the grave of his mother, Margaret Tailyour. The site of the first smithy was where Melville's drapery shop now stands, and was kept by John Arnot, described in his charter as "fabri ferri."

Of the small farmers one was Thomas Carstairs,¹ an elder in Kilconquhar church in 1643, and who died in 1684. His land lay on the south side of the town, immediately to the west of the road leading to Kilconquhar, probably including also "my father's acres,"—the field below this park, on the other side of the road from Mayfield. His son, Thomas Carstairs, was ordained as an elder in 1681; and they must both have been young men on being admitted to this office, as neither of them was married till afterwards.

There was a David Duncan, wright in Nether Rires

¹In the Edinburgh Register of Wills there is this entry:—"On 22 July 1598, the Testament was confirmed of Margaret Hunter, sumtyme spous to David Carstairs, in Nether Rires, parish of Kilconquhar."

in 1667, who signed as witness to a deed executed by Mr Bethune of Balfour in that year. His house may have been in what is now called "the shop door park," the field on the west side of the road going to Balcarres, opposite the dovecote; and which was latterly where the workshop of the joiner on the estate stood—hence its name.

In the register of births for the parish, which begin in 1637, there are seven families recorded as living in Nether Rires up to 1649: those of Thomas Latty, John Osset, Thomas Russell, Alexander Bowman, Thomas Byres, James Braid, and the Thomas Carstairs already mentioned. After that year the addresses of the parents were not given, so that nothing more can be learned from this source. The session-clerks, however, were careful in distinguishing the poor on the roll; and it appears that during the fifty years before Colinsburgh was founded, only six persons in Nether Rires, all women, are mentioned as receiving parochial relief, with occasional small sums to casual poor. In 1645 the tenants in Nether Rires were required to lead stones for the churchyard walls, or else to contribute five pounds Scots amongst them, as their proportion of the charges for necessary repairs. These three particulars help to give us some idea of the limited population at that time.

As already stated, the lands of Nether Rires came into possession of Colin, Earl of Balcarres in 1681, and in the following year he began to feu the land. The first three charters were all dated 30th May 1682, which is therefore the date of the foundation of the village. The most reliable tradition that has come down to us regard-

ing his object in founding a town here, is that it was to provide accommodation for his disbanded troops. They are said to have lived for a short time in tents or temporary structures within the grounds to the east of the House, and it accords with this tradition that most of the early feuars were called the servitors of the earl. The first of these charters was given to James Arnot and his spouse, granting him ten roods of land, on which a house had been already built. It was the house long occupied by Mrs Dewar, or Meggie Bogie, as a public-house; then by Mrs Nelson, now rebuilt by Mr White, and presently occupied by Henry Robertson. It is described as bounded on the south by the public street, on the north, east, and west by the lands of the Earl of Balcarres still unfeued.

The second feu was given to Colin Bennet, vintner, who had been one of the Earl's servitors. His feu was of fifteen roods, and is that on which the house occupied by Mr Dawson now stands. In the next century it was heired by the Cupar family, and from them it descended to Dr Todd, and is still possessed by his descendants in Dysart. The third feu was Patrick Craig's, immediately to the west of the preceding, with a lane between, now occupied as a bookseller and druggist's shop.

Along with these roods on which the houses were built, there were also two or three acres of land included in the charters. James Arnot, for example, had two acres of arable land on the south side of the street, taken off the farm of Thomas Carstairs; and Colin Bennet had three acres on the north side, and the other houses on that side of the street as far west as the

water gate, are all described as being bounded on the north by Colin Bennet's yard.

The only feu granted in 1683 was to Charles Bennet, maltman, who had also been one of the Earl's servitors, and who was the first bailie of Colinsburgh. It was on the south side of the street, near the house of Mr David Niven, having this first smithy on the east, and the ground, then unfeued, of the U.P. Church on the west.

In 1684 other six houses were feued alongside of those already built on the north side of the street. What is now Mr White's shop was feued to Andrew Simson, another of the Earl's servitors, and was long known as the Tolbooth. The next feu to the west, now Mr White's house, was long possessed by the Butcharts, and it is to it that the old doorway built into the house adjoining belongs. They were both rebuilt by Mr White a few years ago, and he retained the ornamental doorway, only putting it into the other house. The initials are R.B. M.T. 1721, for Robert Bogie and his wife. The third house is the one referred to already as James Arnot's, the first to be feued. The next one, occupied as a dwelling-house and chemist's shop, was not built till much later, being originally a part of the adjoining feu. The next two, Colin Bennet's and Patrick Craig's, have been already mentioned. The next house, the property of Mr Alexander Hutt, was feued by David Mair, mason; and the land then belonging to it, and included in the original charter, lay at the west end of Colinsburgh, on the north side of the public road, immediately to the east of the Home Merry road, now belonging to the Balcarres estate. The next house was

a double one, half of which is now in ruins, feued to William Kinloch. The next house, the one east of the currier's and belonging to Mr Flockhart, was built by James Wemyss. The next was feued to Ann Tait, and like so many others was of five roods in extent. These six houses were all feued in 1684, and together with the others already described, were all the houses that formed the town for the short time it was known as Nether Rires. In 1686 the Earl of Balcarres changed the name to Colinsburgh, calling it after himself, "Colin's Brough," as it was sometimes written at first; and all the houses feued after that date are described as being on the lands, or in the town, of Colinsburgh.

To the west of the currier's in the square is what is called the water gate; a small stream which flows down from the Balcarres grounds, which used formerly to run below the opposite house and down to Sandyfield, but which has recently been led into the public drains. It is now entirely closed over, but formerly it was an open stream of some considerable depth. There was a wooden bridge across it, for which the Kirk-session had frequently to provide planks for repairs.¹ In the seventeenth century it was used only by foot passengers, as there were then no carts in the parish, and horses would just have to ford the stream. In later times there was a bridge strong enough for carts, until at last the water was led below the road by a built conduit.

¹The session was then the only public authority, and it lay with it to repair the bridges. In 1654 fifty-two shillings were paid "for ane plank to be ane bridge between Barnyards and Kilconquhar." A new one was built in 1661 at Arnott's Mill, now Kilconquhar Mill, between Incharvie and Kilconquhar, which cost £10 Scots for timber, 26s 8d for putting it up, and 7s 6d to the smith for nails.

At that time the present road between Colinsburgh and Kilconquhar was only a footpath or kirk-road, and it was usually kept in bad condition. The public road formerly sloped away to the west after leaving the houses in the south wynd, passing close to the old farmhouse of Incharvie, now standing by itself in the middle of the field, and joined the road to Elie at the west of Kilconquhar loch.¹

¹Ainslie's Map of Fife, 1775.

CHAPTER II.

The Early Inhabitants.

THE building of the eastern half of Colinsburgh was begun in 1687, the feu of Mr Braid's shop at the one corner, and that of Mr Skinner's premises at the other, along with four or five others, having been granted in January of that year. But the troubles consequent on the Revolution Settlement delayed matters for a time. The Earl of Balcarres was not only an Episcopalian, but a warm supporter of James II., and he did not take kindly to the accession of William and Mary. He was involved in some of the efforts to restore the Stuart family, and as a result he was a prisoner in Edinburgh Castle in November 1689, where he signed one of the feu charters; and feuing then came to a standstill for twelve years, on account of the Earl's absence as a fugitive in France and Holland. After his return, a large number of charters were issued between 1706 and 1721, the year in which he died, and nearly all the remaining feus were issued by his successors before the close of the eighteenth century.

It will be easily understood that Colinsburgh did not then present the substantial appearance it does now.

Sibbald, in his history written in 1710, says, "the earl has caused build a handsome village below his house, which is named after himself;"¹ but for all that it has been greatly improved.

At first each feuar built his house as his fancy or convenience suggested. Most of them were single, one-storeyed houses, others were of two storeys, "high and laigh, back and fore," the entrance to the upper flat being usually by an outside stair, for internal staircases were not generally adopted till later. The larger number of them fronted the street, while others were built further back, with a courtyard in front. There was usually not only the dwelling-house, but also the byre or stable, both alike fronting the street, with a lane or entry leading to the "yaird" or kale green, for flower gardens were hardly thought of in those days. The roofs were mostly of thatch, the windows small, often with a knot in some of the panes of glass; and the doors were often divided across the middle, so that the lower half might be shut while the upper portion was left open to admit light and air, and the women might be seen leaning with their elbows on the lower half, chatting to their cronies outside. A very few of the original buildings still remain, although improved and modernised, but most of the houses have been entirely rebuilt.

The charters were always taken out in the name of the feuar and his wife, so that they served the purpose of a will, the wife having a liferent use of the property if she survived her husband, and the eldest son succeed-

¹History of Fife, edition of 1803, p. 358.

ing to the rights of both parents. The following was a common clause to this effect:—"To Andrew Symson, his lordship's servant, and Catherine Oswald, his spouse, and longest liver of them two in conjunct fee, and to the heirs lawfully procreat or to be procreat betwixt them, whom failing to the heirs and assignees whatsoever of the said Andrew Symson, heritably and irredeemably." Often the same charter contained several feus granted to the same person; and in the event of the father dying first, his son occupied the family house and lands, while the widow had one of the other houses as a "dowry house."

The dispositions given on the sales of property were formerly much more complicated than they are now. Certain friends were appointed bailies or agents by the seller to give formal possession of the property to the purchaser. The usual form was like the following:—"And I hereby desire and require you (leaving a blank for the names,) and each of you conjunctly and severally my baillies in that part hereby specially constituted, that on sight hereof ye pass to the ground of the foresaid subjects before disposed, and there give and deliver to the said Thomas Wilkie and his foresaids heritable state and sasine, real, actual and corporeal possession of all and whole the foresaid two dwelling-houses and byres, with the garden lying to the north of said dwelling-houses, all as particularly before described and here held as repeated *brevitatis causa*, and that by the delivery to the said Thomas Wilkie and his foresaids, or to his or their certain attorney or attorneys in their name bearer hereof, of earth and stone of the ground

of the foresaid subjects, and all other symbols requisite, and this ye noways leave undone."

The curious fact is brought out by these old charters that up to the year 1810 our sovereigns were described as kings of Great Britain, *France* and Ireland. But in consequence of the Irish Union in 1809 the Privy Council resolved that in future the title should be, "by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith." And thus the title of King of France, which had been borne by our kings for four hundred and thirty years, ever since the time of Edward III., was only discontinued in the reign of George III.

The price of the feus was very moderate. The land for houses was given at the rate of a merk, or thirteen and fourpence Scots, for five roods; and the agricultural land was feued at the rate of £3 Scots an acre. Besides these money payments there was then usually also what was called "*kain*," or the payment of a part in kind,—a hen along with each piece of five roods, and a capon on each acre. The hen was valued in 1718 at five shillings Scots, and a capon at ten shillings. Sometimes two houses were built on one stance, and when one of the houses came to be sold the feu was divided between them, the new charter fixing the payment to be made at half a merk and *half a hen* yearly. These *kain* have all now been computed into money payments.

Nearly all the householders had a piece of land, varying from one to three acres, outside the village; and all the land on both sides of the road, as far west as Charlton and as far east as Balcarres Mill, were thus let in

small lots or crofts, which were used for sowing grain or as pasture for cows. Most of these early families have died out, but the property of some of them, as the Mathers, Wilkies, and Gourlays, is still in the possession of their descendants.

One of the houses in the North Wynd was built in 1683, the others at various dates between 1706 and 1721. There were then many small houses, several of which now form part of Mr White's business premises. Fairfield, built in 1717, was afterwards possessed by Mr John Fair, factor¹ on the Balcarres estate, who named it after himself. The land connected with it is in several portions all round the village, and the reason is said to be that the Earl was often short of money, and at different times gave pieces of land to meet his obligations to Mr Fair. The house is a substantial structure, with its crow-stepped gables and the sun-dial on the south-east corner.

The barn at the north of the house was built in 1734, and is now as good as ever it was. The walls are of blue whinstone, so common in the district, and many of the corner stones are three feet long and of proportionate thickness, and are bedded with sea shell lime, now as hard as iron. The big girnel stood here, and an old man, Saunders Mackie, used to tell how he and other five boys about 1770 used to tramp the meal with their bare feet as it was put into the girnel to make it solid, so that it might keep better and occupy less room.

¹The following is a list of the Balcarres factors, with the approximate dates of their appointment:—Alexander Symson, 1682; David Couper, 1728; Thomas Russell, 1746; James Smith, 1760; John Fair, 1772; William Carnie, 1798; Peter Ronald, 1808; David Russell, 1819; John Wood, 1824; John Flockhart, 1873.

There is a door on both the east and west sides of the barn, exactly opposite each other; and it was here the corn used to be thrashed with flails, the current of air through the open doors blowing away the chaff. It was then a common practice for one or two men to make a contract with the farmers to thrash out their grain, which they did with flails in the course of the winter.

The Sandyfield, lying to the south of Colinsburgh, was originally given by the superior for the use of the inhabitants. They made lintholes there for steeping their lint, and it was used for bleaching linen, and afterwards as a bleaching green. The story is told of a woman who dreamed that her clothes left on the bleaching ground had been stolen. The dream made such a vivid impression on her mind that she rose and dressed, and went down to Sandyfield, though it was only three o'clock in the morning. When she reached the green, she found a man from Kilconquhar there, apparently with dishonest intentions. But the fellow was not put about, for he only said, "Ye're early astir, mistress!" "Aye," she said, "but you have been astir before me."

A few incidents have come down to us, which may help to give us some idea of society in these early days. For instance, in 1729 a child was found exposed near Balcarres House by the servants, and by them was handed over to the elders in Colinsburgh. A good Samaritan named Christian Smith undertook to take charge of it for a time, the session paying a small sum for its maintenance. Every effort was made to discover the mother, but in vain. A young woman in St Andrews was suspected, and two men were sent there in search

of her; and having obtained a warrant from one of the parish ministers, they had her subjected to a medical examination by an experienced midwife, when it was found that she could not be the mother.

Meantime the kirk-session undertook to provide for the child,—“This day the Foundling was baptized, the session engaging for the Christian education thereof, with these restrictions: first, if the parents of the child should be discovered, the session should be loosed from their obligation; secondly, if the parish should fail as to the maintenance of the child, the session engaged to see to it till she be learned to read. Her name is Margaret Orphan.” Monthly payments continued to be made for her subsistence for more than a twelvemonth, then she passes out of the record with the entry of so many shillings having been paid for linen for the foundling’s winding sheet.

Penny bridals were then a great institution, and were attended not only with great merriment but often with much disorder and drunkenness. The session frequently tried to regulate them by limiting the numbers that might be present, but they continued to be held in spite of an occasional fine and many admonitions. One young woman in Colinsburgh was understood to have made a good match, and her wedding came off amid great rejoicing. Her husband represented himself to be a traveller between London and Glasgow, and that he was worth four thousand merks. But it soon turned out that he had nothing except a wife and family in Ceres; and the unhappy girl had to return home to her widowed mother.

An old office of these days was "the King's Cadger." The last to hold the office was James Smith, and he possessed the brass charter which had been given to his predecessors. The duty was to carry fish from Earlsferry up to the royal palace at Falkland; and the route followed was from the cadger's wynd in Earlsferry up through Rires and on to Falkland, which was regarded as a public right of way. The emoluments were a house at Newburn, the privilege of grazing a cow and a pig with their followers the half of each day on Upper Newburn, and the other half on Nether Newburn; and further, the right of grazing a goose and gander and their followers at the roadside all the way down to Earlsferry. For a long time the fish had been carried no further than Lahill; and latterly James sold all his rights for sixty pounds to Mr Craigie-Halket of Lahill.

He lived in the north wynd, where Mr Braid's back premises now stand; and he was the last weaver in Colinsburgh, giving it up only about 1850. He was an excellent weaver, and a lady in Glasgow has still a piece of his linen made seventy or eighty years ago. When he took it home he said it was extra strong, for he had given three dands (pulls) to it. He is still remembered as going about in his knee breeches, and as being old-fashioned in all his ways. He belonged to the Secession church in Barnyards, refusing to attend public worship in any other church when there happened to be none in his own; and he was popularly known by the nickname of "Paraphrase," because he would not sing what he called man-made hymns, but only the psalms of David.

Among others living in the north wynd was David

Steele, who made his living by bringing coals from the pits in the moors to the inhabitants. He had eight donkeys who carried the coals in bags upon their backs; and so primitive were the customs formerly that the family and asses entered by the same door, a passage leading to the dwelling-house and to the stable behind. His son, Willie Steele, was a weaver, and latterly the bellman. He is still remembered as a quiet, gentle old man, always regular and punctual with his work, and in ringing the curfew bell at eight o'clock.

Another well-known character was David Brown, or Bird Davie. He was a cobbler, and looked an odd figure in his old night-cap, which he wore night and day, and his ragged apron, which he wore till it fell to pieces. He was a great bird-fancier, and his canaries, in which he did a large trade, were famed for their whistling and other good qualities. He was often annoyed at the boys making fun of him, and used to run out after them as fast as his lame leg would permit. Of course, they were soon out of sight, but as he ran round the corner he would give a smart cuff to the first boy he caught, saying, "Take that, if ye're no in faut noo, ye'll no be long o' being."

The Thoms were a well-known family in Colinsburgh. They were blacksmiths, and father and son had each his own speciality. William Thom, the elder, was famous for his locks, which were sent out to all parts of the country. On one occasion the then Mr Thomson of Charlton sent for him to put on a new lock which he had bought in London. He said to him, "You can't make locks like that here!" But Thom had recognised

it as soon as he saw it, and replied, "Oh yes, for that is one of my own making; you did not need to go to London for it." His son Hugh was equally famous for his cork-screws, which were everywhere sold, and they were always tried through wood before leaving the workshop, as a guarantee of their quality. He kept the particular way in which he tempered them a trade secret, and it is said that a rival found it out by pretending to be a commercial traveller and watching him while at work.

When gasmaking was yet in its infancy the Thoms were the first to manufacture it in the district, and their shop was lighted up by it. At first a good deal of gas escaped before they got the apparatus to work properly, and the smell more than once got into the house above and nearly choked them. They also made a steam horse—a kind of velocipede driven by a small steam engine, and strangers used to come from a distance to see it running along the roads. It is told of William Thom that he was fond of hunting, and General Lindsay used good-naturedly to let him have a horse sometimes. On one occasion he went up to Balcarres where the meet was to be held, and as he could not find a horse in the stables, he coolly took the General's own hunter. When he was asked to come off he refused, saying that no other had been provided for him. His son was of a different stamp. Like many clever men he was quiet and reserved, and of a studious, reflective nature.

Another well-known family of blacksmiths was that of the Gourlays, of which there were three generations. The last of them, Robert Gourlay, was a kind-hearted

old man, and his smiddy was a delightful resort to the lads of the place. He would say, "Blaw up the fire, and let the laddies see to play." He used to tell a young doctor who had just begun practice that he ought to get a horse and gallop away as fast as he could, to make people think he was very busy, for that was the way to obtain patients. Some of these blacksmiths may have had the old legend above their doors, as may be seen in Elie,—

"Our craft is king, none can deny;
Without our aid all arts would die."

Alexander Paxton was a well-known figure in the town at the beginning of this century. He was a weaver, and had a boiler outside his door in which he boiled his yarn. He was the head of the society called "The Apron Men"—the Kilconquhar society similar to the Colinsburgh one—and when young men joined it at the close of their apprenticeships, they went to him to get the apron word and be initiated. Like many others at that time he had a great antipathy to paraphrases and repeating tunes, and would rise and leave the church when either was given out to be sung. When he heard of anything wrong he would exclaim, "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon." He belonged to the East Church, and in going up to the lectern to make an intimation, he would begin with the words, "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord."

The various professions and trades were all represented in Colinsburgh from an early time. In 1706 there was John Lowrie, the barber and periwick maker, and a little later, Colin Couper, the surgeon and apothecary.

cary, Alexander Scott, the brewer, besides bakers, saddlers, clockmakers, and other tradesmen. There was a considerable number of weavers and hecklers, though not so many as in Barnyards and Kilconquhar. John Miles, a damask weaver, used to go to England in the winter time to sell his goods and take orders; and on returning from one of his journeys he unexpectedly brought home an English wife, which afforded plenty of gossip to the goodwives of the town.

There were always several wrights or house carpenters. One of these, Thomas Smith, made a pair of cart wheels about fifty-five years ago, and it was only quite recently that one of them had to be replaced. He bought a lot of wood on one occasion from Charlton, and there was a gean tree amongst them, from which he made a set of dining room chairs for a customer, and they are as good as ever after half a century's use.

The letters used to be carried by an old woman, Nellie Berwick. Once she took a letter to a woman who had a lot of daughters; and as she gave it, she said, "Odd, woman, the plague o' marriage is never to come in among your folk."

Educational matters always received much attention in Colinsburgh. Ever since the Reformation the church has taken care to provide for the education of the young, and these efforts have in general been seconded by the people. In 1656 the kirk-session resolved to build a school at Rires, and they began to lay aside two shillings sterling each Sabbath for the purpose, and certain fees were paid to the teacher; but probably the children were taught in a rented house, as there is n evidence of a

school having been built. The earliest teacher in Colinsburgh was William Petrie, who witnessed a charter in November 1702. Before 1715 a school had been built, the feu having been taken out by the Earl of Balcarres in the name of himself and others for the schoolmaster of Colinsburgh. In 1726 the heritors, with the consent of the minister, resolved that the parish school should be kept at Colinsburgh from 1st October to 1st March in each year, and in Kilconquhar from 1st March to 1st October, "there being an house in the town of Colinsburgh for a school belonging to the parish, and a great many children in the said town not well able to come to Kilconquhar in the winter time, on account of the hazard of children's lives upon the loch when frozen." The heritors then assessed themselves at fourteen shillings Scots on each hundred pounds of valued rent; and the schoolmaster's salary was fixed at a hundred merks.

After a time it was discontinued as a public school, and by 1767 the house had passed into the hands of Robert Tullas; and it is now the property of Mrs Wright. The school in Colinsburgh after this was a private or adventure one, except for a few years after 1766, when it was partly supported by the Relief kirk-session. A Mr Graham taught in it in 1766, Mr Simpson in 1769, Thomas Craig in 1783, and James Thomson in 1792. Probably these were divinity students, as it was common for such to teach in schools or open adventure ones during the recess. Dr Balmer of Berwick taught at Kilconquhar, and Dr John Brown, of Broughton Place, Edinburgh, taught in Elie—both of them afterwards professors in the United Presbyterian Divinity

Hall. Of later teachers there was Alexander Lumsden in 1823, who was also a land surveyor, and who must have required such a supplement to his income, as the fees were only twopence halfpenny and threepence halfpenny a week for each scholar.

In 1831 James Mackie opened a school in the south wynd leading down to Kilconquhar. It was in the house afterwards used by William Tyrie as a flax heckler's shop, and more recently by his daughter, Beatson Tyrie, as a mangle room. When Mr Mackie opened it as a school, the walls inside were whitewashed without any plaster; the ceiling was composed of mats, such as gardeners use; and the earthen floor was not even levelled, and no one ever attempted to sweep it. In 1832, when the Asiatic cholera was raging in the neighbourhood—and when fires were kept burning on the Galla Law to drive away the infection—Mr George Wood, on behalf of the sanitary authorities, examined the school and ordered the floor to be swept, but the effort to make it clean was found to be impossible. After being here about two years the school was removed to a room rented from James Forrester, shoemaker, behind what is now called the Red House, and entering by the narrow lane between it and Mr Braid's property on the west. This school had a composite floor, and the roof and walls were plastered, but it was not so healthy as the old one, for the floor was four or five feet below the ground at the back and one end; and it was so damp that the sums left by the children on their slates were found to be obliterated next morning, while

the children suffered much from ill-health.¹ In Dr Ferrie's time, and chiefly through his influence, the present public school was built at the east end of the town as a subscription school; and in 1873, when the Education Act came into force, it was handed over to the School Board, and by them enlarged and improved, and a suitable playground added. Mr Mackie was succeeded by J. B. Henderson, and he again by J. W. Munro, who was teacher here at the passing of the Education Act, and is now one of H. M. Assistant Inspectors of schools in Aberdeenshire. The subsequent teachers were Donald McPherson, appointed in 1874, Alexander McCaskie in 1878, and James Robertson in 1884.

The proposal at the end of last century to remove the disabilities then resting against Roman Catholics created great excitement in Colinsburgh, as it did in so many other places in Scotland. A public meeting was held on the 28th January 1779, and the following account of it has been preserved:—

“The inhabitants in and about this place, to the number of one thousand two hundred and four, after prayer and a discourse suited to the occasion by the Rev. Mr Cowan, took into their serious consideration the alarming tidings of repealing the penal laws against Popery in this country; and entered with unanimity into the general and spirited opposition of their Protestant brethren throughout the kingdom, and agreed to join their efforts, by every legal and constitutional method, in

¹From reminiscences given me by Mr David Bonthron, a native of Colinsburgh, now in New Zealand. It may be interesting to mention that he sent me a pamphlet sealed with flax gum. The flax leaf is split up, and a supply of gum fit for use is obtained.

supporting the bulwarks of the Protestant religion against the attempts of the Church of Rome, who had ever laboured to corrupt its purity, and sully its genuine beauty.

“They were of opinion that to tolerate Popery was to unhinge our happy constitution, trample under foot the laws of union, alienate our hearts from the best of sovereigns, and to raise the most sanguine hopes in the breast of the Popish pretender. That it was to permit idolatry, for which kingdoms and empires have been overthrown, and cities razed for ever. That it had a manifest tendency to promote error and delusion, by allowing Popish priests to erect schools and chapels for the instruction (or deception) of young and old in their amazing tenets about the Pope’s supremacy, infallibility, and power to pardon, the imperfection of the Scriptures, the merit of good works, the invocation of saints and angels, the worship of images and relics, transubstantiation, communion under one kind, the mass, auricular confession, purgatory and the five spurious sacraments. And lastly, because such a repeal would destroy all faith, confidence, and justice amongst us; for it is a fixed principle with them to keep no faith with the Protestants.

“For these and many other reasons we are hearty in the opposition, and resolve to contribute our mite in support of the general cause.—Extracted from the records by Alex. Scott, clk.”¹

Colinsburgh has always been a healthy place, judging from the number of those who have reached an advanced

¹Scotland’s Opposition to the Popish Bill, p. 177.

age. One of them was Isabella Renton or Hogg, born in December 1747, as appears from an entry in the parish registers of Aberdour ; and who came to Colinsburgh in 1774, as her certificate of church membership bears, "free of public scandal or ground of church censure known to us, that she may be received into any Christian society where her lot may be, and have church privileges as qualified." In 1851, after she had passed her hundred and third birthday, an aged friend from St Monance came along to see her, and she walked through the village to convoy her *young* friend of eighty-six, as she called him, a little bit on his way home.¹ She could read without spectacles, and retained all her faculties till within a very short time of her death. She died in March 1852, in her hundred and fifth year.

Another was Mrs Dewar, or Meggie Bogie, as she was generally called, for at that time married women were often best known by their maiden names. She died in 1829, aged one hundred years and four months, and what is not less remarkable, she died in the same bed in which she was born. Dr Ferrie, in his Statistical Account of the parish published in 1837, says that "she kept an inn or public-house in the parish for more than seventy years. She was of a placid, cheerful disposition, was temperate, but said that she had never been particular as to what she ate or drank." She had a large family, several of whom reached an advanced age ; and one of her daughters named Effie, died in August 1856, in her hundred and first year. In 1823, widow Miles died, having reached her ninety-second year ; while

¹Pittenweem Register, 15th February 1851.

about 1840 there were eighteen inhabitants of Colinsburgh, whose united ages amounted to 1552, or an average of 86 years. Another centenarian was Archibald Guilan, who was born at Kilconquhar in October, 1790, and who died in Anstruther in May, 1891, in his hundred and first year. In his younger days he kept a stationer's shop in Colinsburgh for some time.

The Jacobite rebellions do not seem to have caused much excitement in Colinsburgh or in the parish. The Earl of Balcarres took only a very small share in the rising of 1715, though his sympathies were warmly in its favour. But the kirk-session seem to have been opposed to it, for in August 1715, they held a "solemn fasting and humiliation because of an invasion threatened and designed by the popish pretender." On two of the Sabbaths in December of that year they had no sermon in the church, "by reason of the troubles in this country occasioned by the Earl of Mar and his confederates;" and on the last Sabbath of January, 1716, there was again no sermon, "several of the Earl of Mar's soldiers being scattered throughout the shire."

In the rebellion of 1745, the only persons implicated, as far as I have been able to learn, were Robert Hamilton, younger of Kilbrackmont, and Samuel Wood, his servant, who were present at the battle of Preston. They returned home soon after, and do not seem to have been molested in any way. Alexander Balfour, farmer in Colinsburgh, was reported as having assisted the rebels and transported a cart load of arms from Colinsburgh to Falkland for their use. He was living quietly at home when the reports were made by the supervisor of excise

at Kirkcaldy. The witnesses against Balfour were Thomas Bogle, surgeon, Colinsburgh, and Bessie Thom, spinster there.¹

The old records contain a few notices of the weather. In 1657, the session-clerk wrote, "No sermon this day, be reasone of ane great raine, and the burns being so great that non could gett them crost." The winter of 1799-1800 has often been spoken of as a remarkable one. Here is what the parish schoolmaster of that day wrote of it,—“The last harvest, 1799, was uncommonly late, owing to the spring being cold and late, and the summer being rainy; it is not above two weeks since all the corn in the muirs was cut down, and a good deal of it is still standing in the fields in ricks. This first day of January the shearers are shearing a large field of pease on Robert Dingwall's farm of East Newton; the frost set in about two weeks ago, and continues very intense. 2nd January. A very heavy fall of snow commenced, accompanied with an easterly wind, and the snow drifted much. Third day January. Last night and this morning the weather became fresh, and the snow is melting very fast. From the 1st of January to the 22nd, the wind has continued from the east, during which time we have had frost and fresh weather every eight or ten days alternately, sometimes three days' rain with little intermission, and during the frost a good deal of snow. After the 22nd the wind changed to the west, and the weather is more agreeable; some days the wind is from the east and very cold, mostly a dry frost, which still continues this 14th of February.”

¹Scottish History Society publications, vol. viii., p.p. 260, 345.

About 1820 there happened what was often spoken of as "the long storm." A dead body remained unburied for more than a week, the ground being too hard to permit of a grave being opened; and the snow was so deep that one of the families in Colinsburgh had to enter their house by a ladder at one of the windows in the upper flat. Dr Ferrie wrote that in 1825 there had been no frost the previous winter, that there had been three months' drought in summer, and that the harvest was abundant and early; while in 1826 there had not been a shower for four months during the summer, and in consequence the crops were very light, and the harvest general by the 25th July. In the following winter there were such storms of wind and snow that the children could not get to school, and all communication with Kilconquhar was cut off.

A record of old Scottish life is hardly complete without some reference to drinking customs. Many people used to brew their own ale, for tea and coffee are comparatively modern; and there were fewer restrictions on breweries and alehouses than there are under our modern licensing laws. There was much more drunkenness then than there is now, though unhappily the evil still exists.

It is told of one of the old inhabitants that he called on a lady who offered him a dram; and though he liked it well, he thought it polite to drink only the half, fully expecting that he would be invited to finish the glass. But no hint of this kind was given, and as he had no intention of leaving it, he said, "If it would oblige you, ma'am, I'll just take it up!" which he did. Of another

worthy, who was often unfit for business in the evenings, a neighbour remarked, "It's ae thing to see him in the mornin', and it's anither to see him gaun to his bed at nicht." One of the grocers used to sell whiskey at a penny the glass—the duty was much less then than it is at present—and one morning a navvy having taken off his dram, said he had not a penny with him, but he would pay it again. But the shopkeeper was so doubtful of this that he poured a glass of spring water into the barrel, saying that other customers must pay for it, as he would not lose it. One of the proprietors of Balcarres was speaking to one of his feuars on this subject, trying to impress upon him that whiskey was a poison; when he replied, "Very slow, sir, aye, very slow."

CHAPTER III.

The Founder.

THE Balcarres branch of the Lindsay family was founded by John Lindsay, the second son of David, ninth Earl of Crawford. He was commonly known as "the Parson of Menmuir," as he possessed the revenues of the rectories of that and other parishes. Having studied law, he became one of the Lords of Session before he was thirty years of age, taking the title of Lord Menmuir; and having married the widow of the Lord Advocate, he obtained with her possession of the lands of Balcarres. In 1585 he purchased Balniel, which had belonged to the Ramsays of Lumbanny since 1484, which was then held under King James the Third for the payment of fourpence yearly or a pair of gloves.¹ In the seventeenth century the lordship of Balcarres included the lands of Balniel, Balcarres, and Mill of Balcarres, Nether Cumberlands, Balboothie, Easter and Wester Pitcorthie, Balmakim and Nether Rires.

At that time farm rents were generally paid in kind, with also in most cases a small money payment besides.

¹Muniment Room, Haigh Hall.

For instance, in 1614 the rent paid by George Fleming for Balbuthie was 34 bolls of bear, 39 bolls oatmeal, 39 bolls oats, "but the chirritie,"¹ and 40 poultry cocks and hens. A century later, when Alexander Symson was tenant of the same farm, he paid as rent 66 bolls of good and sufficient bear, 60 bolls oatmeal, 40 bolls oats, 30 threaves of bear straw, two dozen capons and six dozen poultry. The rents of the other farms about the year 1700 may also be given here. Wester Pitcorthie was 168 bolls of grain, 60 threaves of straw, twelve dozen poultry, and £20 Scots. Easter Pitcorthie was then let to two tenants, the rent of each half being 84 bolls of grain, five dozen capons and fowls, 30 threaves of straw, and £10 Scots money. Balniel was rented at 48 bolls grain, six dozen poultry, and 50 merks in money. Balmakim was 84 bolls grain, four dozen poultry, 40 threaves of straw and £80 Scots. The West Mains of Balcarres was rented at 108 bolls of bear and oats, with £180 Scots in lieu of oatmeal. The East Mains of Balcarres paid 117 bolls and 3 firlots of grain, and £135 Scots money, "of silver deutie."

The grain was required to be "well dight," or sufficiently clean, and was to be delivered at such times and in the quantities the proprietor wished, when he had arranged to have it sold; and the tenants were bound to send it to the shipping port desired, not being more than six miles from their farms. In 1674 the Earl of

¹The meaning of the word "chirritie" is doubtful, but it appears to be chaff or refuse. The phrase will then be equivalent to the words "well dight," which occur so often in these early leases, meaning that the grain must be properly cleaned or divested of chaff. I am indebted for this explanation to Mr Cook, solicitor, Anstruther.

Balcarres contracted with George Hume and James Row, merchants in Edinburgh, to sell them nine hundred bolls of victuals, consisting of bear, oatmeal, and oats, grown on the East and West Mains of Balcarres, at the price of £5 Scots the boll. A chalder was then valued at sixteen bolls, or £80 Scots, and a threave of straw was the produce of two stooks of twelve sheaves each, of a standard size.

The existing titles of Balbuthie go back to the year 1456, when Patrick de Dunbar gave the lands to the Bishop of St Andrews for behoof of the provost and canons of the College Church of St Salvador, for the support of two chaplains. In 1547 Norman Leslie, so well known in connection with the murder of Cardinal Beaton, was feuar of these lands, and in that year he conveyed them to David Balfour, "his cousin, friend, and servant;" and in 1564 Queen Mary granted a charter under the Great Seal, confirming David Balfour's charter, notwithstanding any part he and Leslie may have had in the "alleged slaughter" of the Cardinal. Balbuthie was sold in 1783 to Mr Bethune of Kilconquhar, and it is now the property of Mr John Bell, Stenton.

Balcarres House was built by Lord Menmuir in 1595, and the oldest trees in the park were planted by him. The house has undergone many alterations and additions since that time, notably in the present century by the Hon. Robert Lindsay, then by his son, General James Lindsay, and more recently by Sir Coutts Lindsay. The greater part of the original house still remains, incorporated with the more modern buildings ;

and a portion of it may still be seen from the terraces on the south side, next to the old "dowry house." It is now one of the finest mansion-houses in the country.

The old chapel or burying ground was built by Sir David Lindsay, the first Lord Balcarres, in 1635. It was intended for a place of worship, but was never used as such. It was left unfinished, and was never roofed in on account of a difficulty with the bishop, who claimed it as an appanage of his see, and who claimed the right to present the incumbent. To this Lord Balcarres would not consent, and accordingly it was used as a family burying ground. There are skulls and cross-bones carved on the walls; and inside there is a stone carving of the Virgin and Child, which must be many centuries old. Lord Menmuir, who died in 1598 at the early age of forty-seven, who had been Secretary of State and Lord Privy Seal of Scotland, was buried in the kirk at Kilconquhar, but the following were buried in the chapel:—

1. Sir David Lindsay, first Lord Balcarres, died 1641, buried in the chapel pursuant to his will.
2. His younger son, Colonel David Lindsay, who died 7th April 1650, was buried April 11th.
3. Sophia, daughter of Sir David, and wife of Sir Robert Moray, died at Edinburgh 2nd January, and was buried 11th January 1653.
4. Alexander, first Earl of Balcarres, died at Breda, 30th August 1659, buried here 12th June 1660.
5. Charles, second Earl of Balcarres, died 15th Oct., and was buried 21st October 1662. "In the night season." (Lamont's Diary.)

6. Colin, third Earl, died at Balcarres 1722. [1721.]
7. Alexander, fourth Earl, died 25th July 1736.
8. James, fifth Earl of Balcarres.
9. Hon. Robert Lindsay of Balcarres, died 1836.

Colin Lindsay, the third Earl of Balcarres, the founder of Colinsburgh, was born at Balcarres in August 1652, and was baptized on the 23rd of that month, the lairds of Auchmutie and Kincaig being witnesses.² He was the son of Alexander, Lord Lindsay, who was created the first Earl of Balcarres by Charles the Second in 1651; and his mother was Anna, daughter of Colin, Earl of Seaforth, the chief of the Mackenzie clan. His father took part on the side of the Covenanters in the civil war in the time of Charles I., and was defeated at the battles of Alford and Kilsyth in 1645. He again took up arms, commanding one of the four regiments that were raised in Fife for the service of the king, the split among the Covenanters having taken place; but being defeated, he capitulated on favourable terms in December 1651, and returned to Balcarres, where his son Colin was born, and where he remained till the following November, when he went to St Andrews and settled with his family in the house of Mr John Lepar.³ He afterwards went to the court of King Charles at Paris, and died in exile at Breda in 1659. His widow, Colin's mother, afterwards became the second wife of Archibald, the unfortunate Earl of Argyle, who died on the scaffold in 1685,

¹Copied from the M.S.S. of Alexander, twenty-fifth Earl, by the present Lord Balcarres, who has kindly permitted me to make use of it.

²Register of Baptisms for Kilconquhar Parish.

³Lamont's *Diary*, p. 49.

in the Covenanting cause, whom she survived for about twenty years.

Earl Alexander had two sons who both predeceased him. He was succeeded by Charles, his third son, who died three years afterwards in his twelfth year, of a strange disease for one so young—a large stone being found in his heart after death.

In 1662, Colin became the third Earl of Balcarres, when only ten years of age, and he resided at Balcarres with his mother and sisters, until he went to Court at the age of sixteen. Here he was most kindly received by Charles the Second, who told him that he had loved his father, and would himself be as a father to him; and as an earnest of his favour, gave him the command of a select troop of horse, composed of one hundred loyal gentlemen who had been reduced to poverty during the recent troubles.

Not long afterwards he fell dangerously ill, and his condition gave great anxiety to a young lady who had fallen in love with him at his first presentation at Court. This was Mademoiselle Mauritia de Nassau, daughter of the Count of Beverwaert in Holland. The story of their wedding day has often been told. The company had assembled at the church, but the young bridegroom had forgotten all about it, and was quietly sitting at breakfast in his dressing gown and slippers. In his haste he forgot the wedding ring, and at the ceremony used one handed to him by a friend. It was a mourning ring, with the mort-head and crossed bones on it; and the bride had no sooner seen it than she fainted away, and on recovering declared she would die

within a year—a presentiment only too truly fulfilled, for she died in child-bed a twelvemonth afterwards.¹

After the loss of his wife, the Earl made a campaign at sea with the Duke of York, and was present at the battle of Solebay in 1672; and it was at this time that the intimacy between him and the Duke was formed, which continued after the latter ascended the throne as James the Second.

Soon after this he became attached to Lady Jean Carnegie, the eldest daughter of the Earl of Northesk, one of the beauties of the day; and his suit was warmly approved of by the King, who wrote to her father recommending the Earl's proposals in the highest terms. But the lady was coy and refused him, not wishing to take a husband at the royal bidding. The match being apparently at an end, His Majesty used his influence on Colin's behalf with the guardians of a young lady, then a ward in chancery, who had a fortune of a hundred thousand pounds. Before arrangements could be made, however, he was sent on a mission to Scotland, where he again met Lady Jean, and found that she was then quite willing to become his wife, and they were instantly married in 1673, when he had just come of age. By this step he incurred the King's displeasure, and in consequence he had to leave the Court. They lived in retirement at Balcarres, where four children were born to them, only one of whom, a daughter, survived him.

After Lady Jean's death in 1681,² the Earl was permitted to return to Court. He was received with great

¹*Lives of the Lindsays*, II., p. 121.

²"Given for the use of the mortcloth for my Lady Balcarres, two Legg dollars, which is 5lb. 12sh." Session Minutes, 26th October, 1681.

kindness by the King, who could not help asking him how he could commit such a folly as to act in opposition both to his faith and his fortune. All he could say for himself was, that if His Majesty had seen the woman he married, he would have forgiven him sooner. "Ods-fish," said the King, "that is true; they make us all play the fool!"¹

The Earl's third wife was Lady Jean Kerr,² daughter of William, Earl of Roxburgh. She died in 1686, and by her he had one daughter, who became the Countess of Wigton. His fourth and last wife was Lady Margaret Campbell, daughter of the Earl of Loudoun, by whom he had Alexander and James, who in turn succeeded him as the fourth and fifth earls, and also two daughters. It was a daughter of this James, the fifth earl, Lady Anne Lindsay, who wrote the well-known ballad of "Auld Robin Gray;" and the little room at Balcarres in which it was written is still to be seen.

During these years Earl Colin was in high favour with the King, and held many public offices. He was appointed Sheriff of Fifeshire in 1682, a Privy Councillor, and one of the Commissioners of the Treasury in 1686, and Lord Lieutenant of Fife in 1688. But at the Revolution in the latter year his fortunes were clouded over. Along with the Earl of Cromarty and others he levied troops on behalf of King James, but when that monarch

¹*Lives of the Lindsays*, II., p. 129.

²In "The Lives of the Lindsays," II., p. 189, it is said that the Earl's son, Colin, who died unmarried in 1708, was the son of this lady, his third wife. But he was the son of the first Lady Jean, as the entry in the Baptismal Register of Kilconquhar shows: "1680, April 30. Collen, Earle of Balcarres & Lady Jean Carnegie his wife had a child baptised called Collen. Witness Mr William Hay, minister, & Mr Alex. Auchmoutie."

fled from England all his efforts were rendered useless, as the troops were immediately disbanded.

The Earl then waited upon the Prince of Orange, who received him with much favour; but finding that he was far more attached to the late king than to himself, the Prince told him to beware how he acted, for if he transgressed the law he would be left to it. Having compromised himself through correspondence with the exiled king, he was apprehended and confined in the Tolbooth in Edinburgh for four months, after which he was removed to the Castle, where he lay a prisoner till after the battle of Killiecrankie in July 1689; and where he is said to have seen the spectre of Viscount Dundee, who was slain just when he had won the battle. The war died out soon after this, and as the hopes of the Jacobites were thought to have been crushed out, Lord Balcarres was set at liberty.

One of his letters written from abroad at this time and hitherto unpublished, for which I am indebted to the kindness of Lord Crawford, may be given here :—

31. March 1698.

Yours of 20 Feb. coming to my hands when I was in company and a little busy was so laid aside then that I never found it again till 3 days ago. I know not, nor can I guess what that paper is which you say hath been sent from France and doth prejudice. Ther was a short notte I sent after H. J. which came to your hands, he being parted before it came your lenth, but that notte cannot I suppose be what you mean, you haveing seen it. What you putt in cypher I doe not understand nor

can I guess at it, being quyte different from what H. J. left with me. I have communicated your enclosed notte with the queries you desyre should be putt by your best friends here to the Doctor, but I find they are not at all for moveing any more in that matter, which they think wold make but a scurvy noise to no purpos as matters stand at present. I am sorry you have so little hopes of being able to gett home to live quietly. I am of your opinion that our countrymen will outdoe their neighbors in useing severity against honest men, tho' perhaps the wrong step the English government (as some think) is now sensible it made in forcing so many out of the country, may put our people on more moderate measures. I am concerned for the trouble you wreat that honest H. J. is brought into, ther is no kynd of encouragement to come hither, where ther was never so many mouths and so little meat. Mr S. salutes you kindly. Your friends here are all in good health, that is all can be said of comfortable from this. Mr W. has strongly solicited to have them removed, but Mr N. has absolutely rejected that proposall, and spoke more lyke himself on that head than on any other that I know of these years past. Adieu without ceremony. I am your most obedient and most humble servant. C.

He never lost hope of the restoration of the Stuarts, and in 1693 he took part with Sir James Montgomery in a further effort on their behalf; but on the discovery of the plot he had to take refuge in flight, and escaped to Hamburgh, and from thence proceeded through Holland, Flanders, and France to St Germaines, where James

held his Court. He was permitted to return home at the end of 1700, after an exile of seven years. But he could not give up his interest in the old cause, for he was imprudent enough to take part in the rebellion of 1715, although then an old man. He had resolved to be very cautious, but was persuaded by Malcolm of Grange to join the enterprise, who "assured him that the game was sure, and that it was not possible it could fail."¹ He escaped the consequences of his imprudence through the intervention of the Duke of Marlborough, who agreed with the Government that he should be confined to his house at Balcarres under the charge of a dragoon, and he used to be seen skating on Kilconquhar loch with the soldier in attendance on him.

Lord Balcarres was described as one of the handsomest and most accomplished men of his time, a man of letters, but fond of pleasure, and pleasure's favourite; as warm in his affections, grateful to his benefactors, impartial in his judgment whether of friends or enemies, unswerving in faith to his church and his king.² He had a troubled life, but passed through it nobly, making his mark on the history of his age.

The loyalty of Earl Colin to the House of Stuart cost him much. The sacrifices which both he and his father had made led to the incurring of heavy debts, and many a bond had to be given on the security of the estate for borrowed money. One of these in 1683 was for £1200 Scots lent him by John Grahame of Claverhouse, who figures so prominently in the annals of the persecutions,

¹*Sinclair's Memoirs of the Insurrection in 1715*, p. 164.

²*Lives of the Lindsays*, II., 201.

and the bond was witnessed by a "gentleman of the said laird of Claverhouse his troupe."

The following tradition as to the Earl's carelessness in money matters has been preserved. An estate near Balcarres, the acquisition of which would have been very advantageous, was likely to be sold; and with a view to the purchase, he disposed of another estate at some distance, and deposited the sum received for it in a strong box, to be forthcoming when wanted. Day after day, however, some exigency, political or domestic, occasioned his extracting a "gowpen" of gold from this repository. At last the expected hour arrived; the estate was announced to be in the market, and Colin resorted to his strong box—but he had visited it too often, and found it empty.¹

He died in 1721, shortly before the 27th October, for on that date £3 were paid to the kirk-session for the use of the new mortcloth at his funeral, which apparently took place that day.² "He died much lamented by his children and friends, who passionately loved him."

¹*Lives of the Lindsays*, II., 190.

²Kirk-session Minutes, 10th November 1721.

CHAPTER IV.

The Burgh of Barony.

AS we have already seen, the village, or town as it was more generally called in earlier times, was founded by Earl Colin in 1682, and named after himself about 1686. It was also formed by him into a Burgh of Barony in 1686, as Charles Bennet was bailie of the barony in that year, though the royal sanction was not given till later on. It is not a royal burgh, like Earlsferry and some of the other coast towns, for it never had a provost and Town Council; but it is a burgh of barony, created by the Earl himself as its immediate superior and the lord of the Barony of Balcarres.

The royal sanction was given to this by a charter under the Great Seal, dated 18th March 1707, in favour of Lord Cumberland, the Earl's eldest son, and the heirs appointed to succeed to him.¹ This charter erects the lands of Balcarres and others, including the lands of Nether Rires and town of Colinsburgh, into a barony to be called the Barony of Balcarres, and ordains the "manour place thereof to be the principal messuage of the said Lordship and barony." It also contains a nove-

¹Register of the Great Seal, vol. 83, p. 78, in Register House, Edinburgh.

damus in favour of Lord Cumberland of the said barony, "and that in consideration of the great services done by Alexander, Earl of Balcarres, in the time of Charles the First and Charles the Second, and of the great losses which he suffered during the late troubles."¹

By the same charter the town was erected into a Burgh of Barony, to be called the Burgh of Barony of Colinsburgh, with all the usual powers and privileges, and to be held of the Crown for the payment of one penny Scots of blench farm.

The nature of the burgh will be best seen by an extract from one of the title deeds of the Balcarres estate : "As also all and whole the Town and Burgh of Colinsburgh, built upon the said lands of Nether Rires, and erected into a free Burgh of Barony called the Burgh of the Barony of Colinsburgh, with all liberties and privileges belonging thereto; as also power to my said dispoonee and his foresaids, and the burgesses and inhabitants of said burgh, of keeping and holding therein one weekly market every Tuesday for buying and selling all goods, merchant-ware and merchandise whatsoever, proper and lawful to any other Burgh of Barony in the Kingdom of Scotland; and two free yearly fairs to be held within the said burgh, one thereof upon the first Friday of June and the other upon the fourth day of October, each of the said fairs to be continued for the space of eight days; as also power to my said dispoonee and his foresaids of nominating and appointing Bailies, one or more, to act under them, and of creating clerks,

¹Inventory of the Title Deeds of Nether Rires in Muniment Room at Haigh Hall.

officers, and other necessary members of court for preserving and sustaining the said burgh and privileges thereof of weekly markets and free fairs foresaid, and of levying, uplifting, and exacting such customs and tolls of all goods brought to the said weekly markets and free fairs, as is used in any other Burgh of Barony in this Kingdom, and applying the same to their own uses; as also power to my said disponsee and his foresaids, by themselves or their Bailies, of holding courts, punishing transgressors according to law, and of levying and exacting mulcts, fines, and escheats of court arising from such transgressors, and applying the same to their own uses, together with all liberties, privileges, immunities, and casualties whatsoever, as well not named as named, pertaining and belonging by the law and practice of the Kingdom to any Burgh of Barony, sicklike and as freely in all respects as any other Burgh of Barony use and enjoy, or might use, possess, and enjoy, by virtue of their privileges, rights, and infeftments."

These fairs were great institutions in former times. They afforded the best opportunities farmers could have, before the advent of railways, for the disposal of their produce, and large crowds came from the surrounding districts. At the Colinsburgh fair the cattle stood towards the west end of the street, shoemakers had their stalls in the North Wynd, and drapers plied their trade towards the east. Coopers were there with grain measures, washing tubs and pails; weavers came to sell their linen, and farmers' wives their dairy produce, There were stalls where the lads could buy ribbons and

other presents for their sweethearts, and there were sweets and gingerbread in abundance.

They continued to flourish for about a century and a half, but latterly fell off till they practically ceased to exist about thirty years ago. One trader from Kirkcaldy, however, continued to come as long as she was able, setting up her confectionery stall on the regular day till 1878, when she also ceased to attend. She had been in the habit of going to all the fairs with her father as a regular business, and she came to the Colinsburgh one for fifty years altogether.

The dues or customs were collected by the bailies, or at their instance. One lady tells me that she remembers when a girl of seeing Mr David Mathers, after he had retired from business, collecting them, but he does not appear to have been a baron bailie. Latterly these exactions were discontinued; and an old man used to pretend that he had been authorised to collect the dues, to whom the traders gave trifling sums to get rid of him—which he spent in the public-houses before going home.

These fairs were always great occasions to the children of the district; and the story is told of the countess of James, the fifth earl, giving the children half-a-crown each to spend at the fair, and on their return asking what they had bought. When it came to the Hon. Robert's turn, her second son, he replied that he had seen nothing better than his own half-crown. "You may be laird of Balcarres yet," was her remark; and so it was, although most unlikely then. For having made a fortune in India, he bought the estate in 1789 from his elder brother, Alexander the sixth earl, who had inher-

ited Haigh Hall through his countess ; and it was not till 1886, nearly a century afterwards, that Balcarres again came into the possession of the descendants of the original line, when Sir Coutts Lindsay sold it to his nephew, the present Earl of Crawford and Balcarres. When a boy Mr Lindsay had longed to be master of Balcarres, for he used to say he wished he had been herding sheep on the Craig the day his elder brother was born. One of the workmen on Balcarres estate in his time had got an addition to an already numerous family ; and the first time Mr Lindsay met the man after the event, he said to him, " Well, I hear you have got another child ; is it a male or female ? " " I dinna ken, sir, whether it's a male or a female, but it's a fine bit laddie, an' we're gaun to ca'ed Robbie efter yersel'."

There was also a Court of the Barony, for it was the privilege of the barons to hold such courts within their lordships. These courts came down from feudal times, having been instituted in the middle of the eleventh century. The idea was that all the nobles and great landowners were vassals of the king, holding their estates from him, bound to do him homage, and with their retainers to do battle for him in his wars. They in turn again held their retainers, tenants, and feuars as subvassals, claiming implicit authority over them, and over all within their barony. In their courts they exercised jurisdiction in criminal as well as in civil matters, having the power of life and death in their hands. They held what was called " the power of pit and gallows," the female criminals being drowned in the one, while men expiated their offences on the other. The Earls of

Crawford—the elder branch of the Balcarres family—who lived in great magnificence at Edzell, had their pits and gallows, for example, in the neighbourhood of the castle, and the site of them has recently been identified.¹

The power of these Baron Courts was gradually withdrawn, until they practically ceased in 1747, “when their jurisdiction was by law curtailed to an extent which rendered them no longer a convenient source of profit or prestige to their possessors. A baron still retains the right of holding courts, for it is still on statute that he may pursue at his own courts for feu-duties and rents, and may compel his tenants to perform their legal services.” He has also a jurisdiction in petty cases, but “it is so burdened with prohibitive restrictions as practically to preclude its exercise.”²

Justice of Peace Courts were held in Colinsburgh at least as early as 1748, when the Baron Courts had been practically abolished; for in that year the kirk-session instructed Alexander Duncan, constable, to summon several of their debtors to the Justice of Peace Court at Colinsburgh. The Sheriff Small Debt Court was held in Colinsburgh from the passing of the Act in 1837 up to 1866, when the railway was extended from Kilconquhar on to Anstruther, where it has since been held.

It is impossible to say what kind of cases were dealt with in the Baron Court of Colinsburgh, as none of the minute books have been preserved, so far as I can learn. But judging from the Urie court book there would be complaints about the miscropping of land, the taking

¹Marshall's *Historic Scenes in Forfarshire*, p. 248.

²*The Court Book of the Barony of Urie*, edited by Rev. D. G. Barron, for the Scottish History Society.

down of the timber or thatch off the farm houses and offices when a tenant left, the killing of game and carrying firearms, and petty cases of assault and theft.

The obligations under which the tenants and feuars lay to the court were always set forth in their tacks and charters. Their lands were thirled to the mill of Balcarres, that is, the tenants were bound to take all their grindable corn there, and to pay the miller's use and wont. They were required to attend the three head courts held yearly in Colinsburgh, and such others to which they might be warned; to obey the sentences and decreits thereof, and to assist the officers of the court in the lawful discharge of their office. And they were held bound to defend the Earl's person on all lawful occasions against all mortals—the Queen's Majesty alone excepted.¹ They were to ride and sail in person with the said Earl and his successors on their lawful affairs when required, he always maintaining them and their horses. They were not to lift or carry arms against the Earl or to deforce his officers, but to assist them in the lawful execution of their office. And decreits issued at the instance of the Earl by his bailie were to be held sufficient, any law notwithstanding.

In one of the titles of Mr Dawson's land at the west end of Colinsburgh, given by the Hon. Robert Lindsay in 1816, the courts are still mentioned:—"they being also obliged to answer to our Baron Courts to be held by me or my deputies within any part of our barony upon lawful warning, and shall obey the lawful sentences thereof to be pronounced against them." This,

¹This was Queen Anne, in 1708.

however, does not show that courts were held up to that date, as it may have been only the formal repetition of the language of an earlier deed. In the time of Alexander, the sixth Earl of Balcarres, when some land was sold which is now included in Cairnie park, it was specially declared in the disposition that the tenants of the land would no longer be subject to the Barony Court, or thirled to the Balcarres mill.

There is no evidence that death sentences were ever inflicted by the Baron Court of Colinsburgh. There used to be such, however, in the neighbourhood in earlier days. The road which leads out of the town towards the west, as it inclines down to the Charlton park walls, is called the Gally Law, but was formerly known as the Gallows Law. And a good many years ago when William Malcolm was ploughing the land bordering on the south side of the Gally Law—then possessed by Mr John Brash,—he turned up some stone coffins containing skeletons in good preservation; and when these had been examined by Dr Todd, he found from the state of the necks that the men had died from hanging. There was no clue as to the dates, but according to tradition the remains belong to the time when the Thane of Fife lived at Rires. He was wont to *bicker* or run down to the great tree at Rires—hence the name, “Bicker Tree”—to see his serfs hung at the Gallows Law. It was a tree of immense size, and as it stood on an elevated position it was a landmark for vessels coming to the Frith. It has now crumbled away, and many pieces of the trunk used to be carried off as souvenirs.

In this connection it may be noted that when the new

approach from Colinsburgh to Balcarres was being made by Sir Coutts Lindsay in 1871, the men digging the foundations of the lodge came upon several stone coffins. They were made of slabs of stone set up edgeways, with flat stones across the top. They were scarcely four feet long, and the bodies had been laid in a sitting posture. The late Dr Kennedy of Elie—a skilled surgeon and the leading medical practitioner in the district—found from the size of one of the thigh bones, that if the others were in proportion, it must have belonged to a man seven feet in height. Could they have been some of the old Danish invaders? or were they of pre-historic times? The gate at this lodge is a fine specimen of Venetian hammered iron work of an early date, showing the artistic taste of Sir Coutts Lindsay. The vessel bringing the gates from Italy was wrecked on the way, and they had to be fished up from the sea.

The baron did not usually preside at these courts himself, though he was occasionally present. The bailie was the president; and the first of these in the Colinsburgh court was Charles Bennet, maltman, a servitor of the Earl of Balcarres, and one of the earliest feuars. He is described in 1686 as "ballzie of Colinsburgh," and appears to have held the office for a long time. The following, among others, were also bailies of the barony,—Alexander Symson, 1706; David Cupar, 1747; Andrew Gardiner, 1755; James Smith, 1764; and William Carnie, 1800.

The earliest meeting of the Barony Court of which I have found any record was held about 1688, when Daniel Sharp in Colinsburgh was convicted of assault to the

effusion of blood, and was fined £100 Scots, with twelve pounds additional in case of failure, "as two bloodweits incurred by him."¹ The court was held in the manor place of Balcarres, presided over by George Smith of Gibliston, bailie of the barony; George Syme was then the procurator-fiscal, and John Guthrie, notary public, was clerk of court.

There is another reference to a meeting of the court in 1755, endorsed on the back of one of the titles to Mr White's property. John Hutchison had bought a house in Colinsburgh, and the disposition was made out in his wife's name as well as his own, conferring on her the liferent use of it, and when he wished afterwards to sell the house to Alexander Butchart, his wife had to give her consent to it. The minute is in the following terms: "At Colinsburgh the thirtieth December, Jajvij and fifty-five years. The which day, in presence of Andrew Gardiner, baron baillie to the Earl of Balcarres, sitting in Judgement in ane fenced court, then compeared Mary Johnstoun, spouse to John Hutchison, Colinsburgh. In testimony hereof she has subscribed this her Ratification with her hand, as also the said Bailie, and Thos Trail, clerk to the said ratification, day, place and year of God afore mentioned before the witnesses within subscribing, and upon which the said Alex. Butchart entered the Court, and took instruments on the said ratification."

The clerk to these baron courts required always to be a notary public, and in 1711 Thomas Finlay, writer in Elie, was "the said Earle's clerk of court;" and as we have seen above, Thomas Trail, writer, held that office

¹"Bloodweit," a fine paid as a compensation for the shedding of blood.

in 1755, and John Anderson held it in 1800. I have not been able to learn the names of the officers or "dooms-
ters" of the court, though one may hazard the guess
that perhaps John Ferguson, the Earl's trumpeter, may
have appeared in that capacity in his livery of red and
yellow.¹

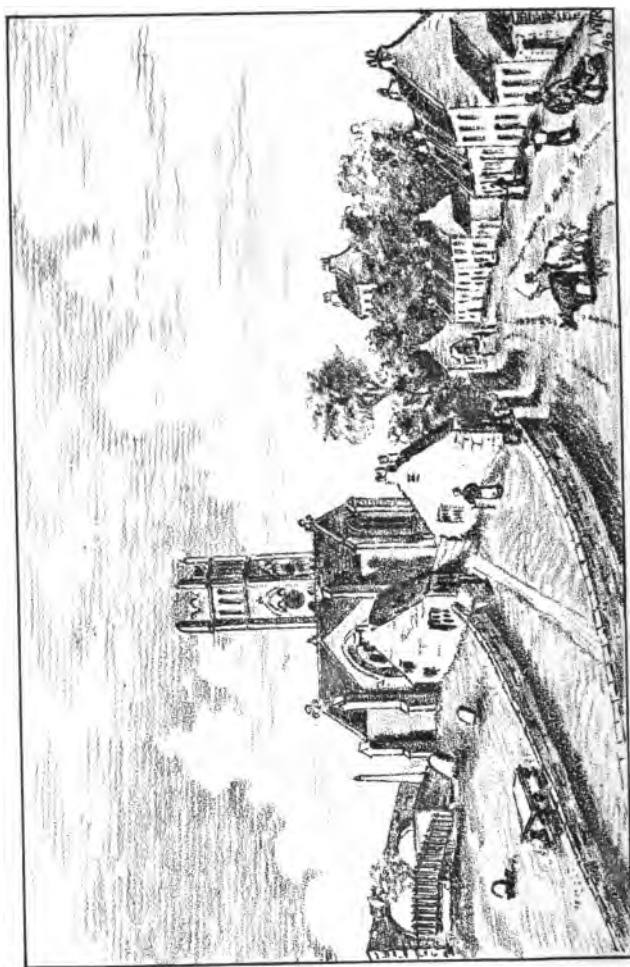
The meetings of the court were held in the Tolbooth,
which stood in the centre of the town, on the site of Mr
Robert White's front shop. The house was built by
Andrew Simson in 1684; it was sold to Philip Jervice in
1723; and it was afterwards bought by the Earl of Bal-
carres, and used as a Tolbooth; and it continued long
after to be called "the Tolbooth." There does not
seem to have been much use for a prison in Colinsburgh
at any time, as the population was small and the kirk-
session looked well after offenders; but in these days in
most burghs the town council met in the Tolbooth as the
ordinary place of meeting, so it would serve in Colins-
burgh as a town hall. When the Hon. Robert Lindsay
rebuilt the Balcarres Arms Hotel, now tenanted by Mrs
Haggart, he made a "lock-up" in the north-west corner
of the inn yard, but it was scarcely ever used, and is now
a cellar connected with the shop above. The story is
told of Mr Lindsay when the hotel was being built—it
had formerly been a malt-barn—that he was not pleased
with the windows; and riding through the village one day
attended by his groom, he found that the masons were
away at their dinner, and springing off his horse he ran
into the house and picking up a hammer, broke the lintels

¹Privy Council Warrants, 1684, quoted in Brown's *Covenanters of the Merse*,
p. 199.

and compelled the masons to build the windows as he desired.

The public bell hung in the west gable of the Tol-booth, and used to be rung every evening at eight o'clock, and at six o'clock in the summer mornings. When Mr Ronald pulled down the old building and rebuilt it he restored the bell to its former place, but as the rope was accessible to every one, for it hung outside the wall, having merely the end twisted to a cleek, the lads used to make so much din on occasion of weddings and other merry-makings, that he took it down altogether—though not without protest on the part of some of the inhabitants. The recess in which the bell hung, now built up, can still be seen in the chimney-head. After this a hand-bell was rung for some time in the evenings, the same now used by John Corbitt, the present bellman, when making announcements of sales or public meetings. One of the last of these old bellmen was Alexander Ireland, a weaver. The wives used to say of him "There's Sandy's tatties poored, he's awa' to ring the bell;" Sandy being credited with ringing the bell when the potatoes for his supper were ready, whether it was eight o'clock or not. He and his wife lived in an old house in the north wynd, till it fell down about them one windy night. He was succeeded by George Paxton, and after him came William Steele. They called on the inhabitants on "Handsel Monday" for their handsels, and these gifts formed their chief remuneration.





KILCONQUHAR in 1830.

CHAPTER V.

The Parish Ministers.

PREVIOUS to the Reformation the church of Kilconquhar belonged to the Cistercian Nunnery of North Berwick. It had been the seat of a Culdee establishment, but in the twelfth century the Popish religion came to be in the ascendant. In a record of the churches in Fife in the year 1177, Kilconquhar is mentioned, with the chapel, (supposed to be the chapel of Our Lady of Rires,) having a stipend of a hundred merks. It was bestowed on the convent of North Berwick by Duncan, Earl of Fife in 1200; and it was consecrated by Bishop de Bernham in 1243.

The records of the clergy before the Reformation are exceedingly scanty. The earliest notice that has come down to us is of William, parson of Kilconquhar, who witnessed an undated charter of the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century. About 1295 the rector of the church of Abercrombie was chaplain of the parish of Kilconquhar, and in 1463 Alexander de Penicuik is mentioned as vicar. In 1482 William Wawane, vicar of Kylconquhar, witnessed a charter by George Porteous, conveying the lands of Balcaskie to John Strang.

And at Edinburgh on the 10th September 1503, the king granted by a letter under the Great Seal to Mr Leonard Logy for his service a pension of forty pounds Scots to be paid annually to him for life, or until the king should present him to a benefice of a hundred merks. He soon did this, for in 1505 Mr Leonard Logie is described as vicar of Kilconquhar in a charter of the lands of Dalhousie. And in 1538 Sir George Wawane was vicar of Kilconquhar, for he witnessed a charter at Dunblane in October of that year.¹

An altar in Kilconquhar church was founded in 1499 by Patrick Dunbar, laird of Kilconquhar, to "our lady of Pitie," and at the same time he mortified a sum of money for the souls of his mother, his wife and himself.²

The derivation of the word appears to be, *Kil* meaning cell or church, and *Conquhar*, or Connacher, the name of the founder, or the hermit who lived in the shrine. This is the derivation given by Rev. A. Small in Sinclair's statistical account of the parish in 1793; but Dr Ferrie, in his account written in 1837, gives it as *Kil* a cell or church, *Ceaun* a head or part above, and *Iuchair* a stream which issues from a lake, thus making the word mean "the cell or place of worship at the head or extremity of the fresh water lake." This is very ingenious, but the earlier forms of the name make the former derivation more likely to be the true one; and it is doubtful whether the loch existed so early. It used to be spelt in many different ways, as Kilcunewath, Kilconwath, Kilconcath, Keinocher, Kinneuchar, Kinnouch-

¹Register of Great Seal, vols. II. and III.

²Wood's *East Neuk of Fife*, p. 155.

ar, Kylcunquhair, Kilconquhair, Kilconwhere, with various modifications of these.

The parish included Elie and St Monance, but these were disjoined into separate parishes in the first half of the seventeenth century, the kirk-session intimating that they had no objection.

ALEXANDER SPENS was the first minister after the Reformation. He was settled in 1560, and was one of those in St Andrews whom the first General Assembly held in that year thought most qualified for ministering and teaching. The parishioners complained of him in June 1565, "for not ministering the communion these six years bypast." He was translated to Cupar in 1567, where he had a stipend of eighty pounds in Scots money, or £6 13s 4d sterling. He died in 1568.¹

GEORGE LESLIE was the next minister. He was presented to the vicarage by James VI. on 24th August 1568, having been previously settled at Strathmiglo. In 1569 he was complained of "for not making residence at his kirk, but travelling in diverse parts of the country at his pleasure," for which he was admonished, and in case of disobedience to be suspended or deposed. His stipend was "eight score pounds, now vicare, defalcated therfor four score and fifteen merkis."² He remained here till 1573, when he was translated to Mortlach.

DAVID SPENS is given as the next minister in the list of the ministers of Kilconquhar, in the Minutes of the

¹Dr Hew Scott's *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, from which the outline of what follows in the chapter has been obtained, and which is supplemented from many other sources.

²*Register of Ministers, Readers and Exhorters*, Maitland Club, p. 23.

Synod of Fife, 1611-1687, published by the Abbotsford Club in 1837, but the name is not given in Scott's *Fasti*, and I have not been able to learn anything regarding him.

ANDREW MONCRIEFF was settled about 1576. He is said to have been a son of Sir William Moncrieff of that Ilk, and brother of John Moncrieff, advocate. He was appointed by the Privy Council in 1589 as one of the commissioners for the preservation of "the true religion" in the sheriffdom of Fife. He was also appointed by the General Assembly as one of three members to visit the presbytery of Lothian, "to visit and try the doctrine, lyfe and conversation, diligence and fidelitie of the pastores within the said presbytery, and sicklyke to try if there be any of the beneficed number within the samen not making residence."¹

He was translated to Crail in 1593, where he died on 8th August 1596. James Melville says of him that he was "a godlie, faithfull and upright brother, whose death was ominose to the Kirk of Scotland."²

JOHN RUTHERFORD, A.M., was laureated at the University, of St Andrews on 1582, and was ordained to the second charge of Cupar in 1590, from which he was translated to Kilconquhar in 1594.

At a visitation held on 20th October 1595, "anent his doctrine, albeit sum affirmed it to edificatione, yet the most part thocht it not so plane nor so popular as neid war for the vse of the people. Sen his coming their he never had ony examination nor particular cate-

¹*Books of the Kirk*, p. 83.

²Melville's *Autobiography and Diary*, p. 411.

chising vpon the grundis of religion. The supper of the Lord was never yet ministred sen his entry. He has no exercise on the Sabbath afternone, albeit the parish be populous, and their be a town wher the kirk standis, quhilk wald furnish sufficient auditorie; wherby it cumes to pass that because of no exercise in the kirk the Sabbathis afternone is often tymes spent be them of Kilconwhere in playing, drinking, and sic vther prophane exercises. Na particular visitation of families for trying the practise of religion, quhilk as it aught to be in all, so is most requisit in ther congregation; as for sundry other causes, sa chieffie in respect the bounds of the parishon are far distant, and the thrid part frequentis not the kirk, quhilk aucht to be supplied be visitation and particular dealing. In visitation of the seik that are adiacent to the place of his awn residence diligent, but lytle care had of the rest. That variance and mislyking quhilk was betwix the gentlemen of the parish before Mr John's entry, and whilk be occasion of his admission therof was farder kindled is not yet removed; neither has Mr John traveled as he ought for vptaking of the samyn, but rather his indiscreit behaviour gives occasion of farder alienation of myndis, forsamekle as sen his entry he has ever vsed himselff frontie towards them that opposed his admissioun; has not frequented their cumpany so familiarlie, nor traveled in that wisdom whilk becam him to mak his ministrie gracious vnto them, but be the contrar hes inclyned and shewen himselff mair affected to the vther faction, whilk the breteren visitours fand to be the very ground of all the enormeteis within the syd

congregation." He was also "fund falt for not vrging the repaying of his manse, and forther during the tym his manse is not repared he had not made his residence at Kilconwhere, being the ewest to the kirk and a very populous part of the parishon. Quhilkis being reportit and the judgment of the haill brithering of the presbyterie being crawit concerning Mr John, quhat they knew of him, and particular it was fund by the report of the brethering that he was become wain and louse in his behaviour and speichis at gentleman's tabillis, ane brawler and boster to the grit sclander of his profession and hindrance of any growth of Christis Evangell teachit be him thair. The brethering refarres forder tryall to be tane after the synodell."

"June 3. Entering in the tryell of Mr John ther wer ane act of refrance from the synodell assemblit, quhairin the said Mr Jhone confessed he was the penner of that infamous and godles lyble intituleit, 'The heade of Blackerie doctrin resolute in a Remist method.' This was a libel on paper written to ease his mind against Mr David Black, minister of St Andrews, who had invaiyed against his non-residence and his doctrine in the presbyterie, and had been stolen from his desk after he had read it to him by the laird of Burley."

He was deposed by the presbytery on 29th July 1596, having "baith in the discharge of his ministry, and doing, so far as lay in him, disqyit to the peace of the haill Kirk of God in Scotland, be the wretting of that infamous and false lybell," and being "unprofitable and maist slanderous in his ministrie, and maist pernicious in wretting and spreading that lybell." The Synod

confirmed the sentence, but he appealed to the king and commissioners of the General Assembly, at their meeting at Falkland in June 1597, who reduced the sentence of deposition and reposed him in his charge. On the 30th of the same month the presbytery refused to acknowledge him and adhered to their former Act; but at the Assembly of 1598 it was agreed to for the sake of peace.¹ In 1601 he craved liberty of transportation, or else to have a helper, saying he was overburdened. He was released by the presbytery in 1603, and betook himself to the profession of medicine,² but was afterwards settled at Dairsie, and in 1626 he was translated to Monifieth.

JOHN CARMICHAEL, A.M., studied at St Leonard's College, St Andrews, where he took his degree in 1584. He was ordained at Newburn parish in 1595, from which he was translated to Kilconquhar on the 11th August 1603.

He was one of those who met and counselled with the six ministers previous to their trial at Linlithgow in January 1606, who were accused of high treason and banished for having held an Assembly at Aberdeen in the previous year; and after the trial he accompanied them to their place of confinement in Blackness Castle. He was one of the forty-two ministers who signed a protest to Parliament against Episcopacy; and he was one of the eight ministers commanded by the king in May 1606 to go to London, to confer with him concerning the estate of the Kirk in Scotland. He sailed from

¹Scot's *Apologetical Narration*, p. 100.

²Melville's *Diary*, p. 417.

Anstruther on the 15th, and arrived in London on the 25th August. They were dissuaded by many of their friends from going out of the country, and urged to send their excuses to the king; but in the end they resolved to go forward and to commend themselves to God's protection and direction in all things.¹ After various conferences Carmichael was sent to advise with and be under the surveillance of Dr Tobias Matthew, Archbishop of York, on 23rd November, but he obtained license to return home in February 1607, on condition of keeping himself quiet, of not attending synod or presbytery, and confining himself to his parish.

He was imprisoned for his non-conformity; and released by the Privy Council in July 1614, the Synod having presented a petition to that effect in the previous May.² He was offered the degree of D.D., two years afterwards, but refused it. He was a member of the Assembly in 1618, and opposed the articles which the King wished to introduce, such as private communion and baptisms, that communicants should kneel when receiving the elements at the Lord's Supper, and that certain holy days should be observed, as Christmas and Good Friday. He was summoned before the Court of High Commission in August of the following year, as accessory to the writing a book called "The Perth Assembly"—in which these Articles were condemned—and for disobeying the Acts thereof. He firmly resisted all the innovations proposed by the King, and was a man godly, learned and zealous in the cause of right-

¹Row's *History*, p. 231.

²*Minutes of the Synod of Fife, 1611-1687*, Abbotsford Club, p. 78.

eousness and truth. He was proposed by some of the citizens in Edinburgh to fill a vacant charge there in 1620, but the state of his health made this impossible; and he died in that city in June 1622, when he was about fifty-eight years of age, and in the twenty-seventh year of his ministry. He had two sons, one of whom was minister in Markinch.

Row, the historian, in speaking of those who were "zealous opposers of the Hierarchy," writes—"After him I name Mr John Carmichael, minister at Kinnowher, a man inferiour in learning to none in the kingdome, a learned divyne, a great philosopher, whilk he did often evidence to the admiration both of his brethren and strangers. He was a scholler of Mr Andro Melville's, who often affirmed his scholler was more learned nor himself. He was a most powerfull, zealous and eloquent preacher of God's word, inveighing at all occasions againis that disorder which had bin brought into this Kirk by the alteration of the good old government; and being brought to Edinburgh for cure to his sick bodie, he died of that judgment. A little before his death, a minister of Edinburgh had bin visiting him, came out from him thinking he should never speak againe, but presently give up the ghost, meeting with ane burgess of Edinburgh, whom he had perverted, and drawn to conformitie, told him that he had been visiting Mr John Carmichael, and that now his speech was laid; but a little before, speaking of the Ceremonies that were come into this Kirk, and his judgment being asked concerning them, he compard them (said he) to

pasments upon cloths,¹ that suppose the cloths might want them, yit when they have them they are ornaments unto them. Immediate after this, this burgess meeting with another, ane honest man, who was not conforme, tells him what his minister had told him, that Mr John Carmichael had so spoken before his speech was laid. But that other answered, I mervall that any honest man should so speak of his brother in the ministrie; and therefore requested his nighbour to go in to Mr John Carmichael himself, and he hoped that he should yit speake, suppose it be said that his speech is laid, and show his awin mynde; whereunto he consented, and so they both went in to him together. He being verie weak, and not desyreous to speak, the honest man himself who was so informed by his minister, cryes to him, 'Sir, will ye tell us your judgment of thir Ceremonies and ordours now come into our Kirk? they say that ye have compared them to pasments upon cloths; the cloths may want them, but yit when they are putt on, they are an ornament unto them.' For als weak as he was, he raised himself up in his bed, and said, 'The Lord knows I never made such a comparison; indeed, I have heard some ministers speak so; but I assure you, this comeing in of Bishops and Ceremonies in our Kirk, if they be not hastilie removed againe, shall utterly wrack and destroy it. The Lord help it, for Christ's sake.' Now, ye see the honest man's mynde; and it is more nor noture that the kingdome of antichrist, poperie, and prelatie, is much advanced by lies."²

¹Pasments—ornaments on dress strips of lace and silk sewed on clothes.—Glossary to Row's *History*, p. 549.

²*History*, p. 439.

HENRY ROLLOCK, A.M., was a son of Thomas Rollock, advocate in Edinburgh, and nephew of Robert Rollock, Principal of Edinburgh University. He took his degree at St Andrews in 1615, and was first settled at Auchterarder, from which he was translated to Kilconquhar in 1623. He only remained here, however, for five years, being then translated to Trinity College Church, Edinburgh. He died in June 1642.

In 1637 he was a candidate for the bishopric of Argyll, and efforts were made by his friends to get him appointed coadjutor to the blind bishop of Galloway; but in both cases he was unsuccessful. Principal Baillie of Glasgow, one of the leaders of the church at that time, says of him in one of his letters to his friend William Spang, "he is your good friend, but hes lost all his reputatiōne, as it seemes, most deservedlie; it wer good he wer a bishop, for then he needed preach none; he might eat, wear, play, and look as stately as he now does without challenging."¹ He must, however, have changed in his views, for he was associated with Alexander Henderson and others in showing the expediency of renewing the Covenant;² he publicly read the excommunication of the Bishop of Moray; and he was eager to have censures passed by the Assembly against all who were in favour of innovations not approved of by the church.³ After this Baillie speaks much more highly of him, as when he said, "he preaches very patheticklie," and that "by his sermons he made the people shake out their purses," for the expenses of the war carried on by the Covenanters.

¹Baillie's *Letters and Journals*, I. p. 6. ²Ibid, I. p. 52. ³Ibid, I. p. 359.

DAVID MONRO, D.D., had been Regent in the University of Edinburgh, and was ordained in the parish of Kemback in 1618, from which he was translated to Kilconquhar in 1628. He was a member of the Court of High Commission in Scotland, appointed by Charles I. in October 1634, to put down Popery; and in 1637 he was a candidate for the bishopric of Argyle, and was thought the most meet, but had too few friends at Court. He nearly lost his life on this account. Baillie, writing in July 1638, says, "We are grieved for the stoning of D. Monroe, when he came from Edinburgh, where he had much company with the Bishops, and was thought to be a spye to them of the actions and proceedings of the Noblemen. The women at Kinghorne, at diverse parts of the towne, in great multitudes, were sett for him. Some gentlemen in company defended to their power, and gott him on a great horse, whereby he escaped death, bot not wounds and blood."¹ He seems to have changed somewhat and gone over to the popular side, for he "conformed to presbytery in 1638;"² and along with all the other members of presbytery he signed the Solemn League and Covenant on 18th October 1643.³ He died in December 1645, aged about sixty-four years, and in the twenty-eighth year of his ministry.

DAVID FORRET, A.M., was Regent in the old College of St Andrews, and was first settled at Denino in 1638, then in Forgan in 1640, from which he was translated to Kilconquhar in 1646. He had been "pedagogue" or

¹Baillie's *Letters and Journals*, I. p. 94.

²Appendix to *Minutes of Synod of Fife*, 1611-1687, p. 207.

³*Minutes of the Presbyteries of St Andrews and Cupar*, 1641-1698, p. 15.

private tutor to Alexander, first Earl of Balcarres at home, at the grammar school at Haddington, and at the University of St Andrews;¹ and by him he was presented to the living at Kilconquhar, and inducted there on the 27th May 1646.

He was called to Edinburgh in 1649, but great opposition was made to his removal. The session appointed all the elders to go to St Andrews "with ane petition to the presbyterie to desyre ther concurrence for hendering off ye transportation of our minister from yis kirk to Edinburgh;" and Lord Balcarres and the laird of Kin-craig were appointed commissioners to oppose his removal at the meeting of the Commission of the General Assembly, when his translation was refused.

Like most of the evangelical ministers of that day he was a covenanter, having signed the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643; and in 1650 he paid 200 merks as his proportion of the 1800 merks given by the ministers of the presbytery, "for the levy of ane regiment of horse to the present service."² In the provincial Assembly at Cupar in 1650 there was great reasoning as to whether they should receive the Malignants, as the Royalists or Episcopalians were termed; and Mr Forret reasoned on behalf of those who had given satisfaction.³ At the meeting of the Synod of Fife in 1661 he was moderator, when a paper was ordered to be intimated in the several parish churches, "to put people in mind of their oath to God in covenant, in case that Episcopacy should again be established in the land." "The

¹*Memoir of Lady Anna Mackenzie, Countess of Balcarres*, p. 34.

²*Minutes of the Presbytery of St Andrews*, 1641-1698, p. 57.

³*Lamont's Diary*, p. 23.

nixt day, in the afternone, they were raised by the Earle of Rothes and the Laird of Ardrosse, two members of parl. (yowng Balfowr Beton being present with them for the tyme), and desyred them vnder the paine of treason, presently to repaire to ther several charges; which they accordingly did. In the mean while, the moderator (Mr Forret,) offered to speake, and Rothes answered, 'Sir, wither doe ye speake as a private man, or as the mouth of the meiting? If you speak as the mouth of this meiting, you speake high treason and rebellion.' After that Mr Da. Forret followed Rothes to his chamber, and spake to him; and amonge other things, speaking of the Covenant, he said, that few or none of ther meiting bot had ministred the Covenant to hundreds, bot for himselfe, he had tendered it to thowsands, and if he sould be silent at this time, and speake nothing for it, bot betray the peopell, he said he wist not what he deserved—hanging were to little for him. Rothes professed to this judicatory that it was sore against his will that he came on that employment. Howeuer many of the ministrie blames Mr James Sharpe, m^r of Craill, for the present, chaplain to his Maj. commissioner, E. of Middleton, for their scattering; for he wrat ouer to some of them, some days before, that a storme was like to breake; and the said Mr Da. Forret said of him that he was the greatest knave that ever was in the Kirke of Scotland."¹

Mr Forret was always on the most intimate terms with the Balcarres family. When the first Earl had to go abroad during the reign of presbytery, accom-

¹Lamont's *Diary*, p. 134.

panied by the Countess, he left his two sons, Charles and Colin, under Mr Forret's care, and they found in him "a most kind and judicious friend and supervisor." The Earl never saw his sons again. He died in Holland in September 1659, and his remains were brought from thence and landed at Elie in the following December. They lay at Balcarres till 12th June, 1660, the eve of the Restoration, when they were interred in the chapel, the ordinary burial place, with suitable solemnity.¹ The late Earl of Crawford described Mr Forret as "one of those attached and confidential family friends of whom so many examples present themselves in the history of the ancient families of Scotland."²

He was present at the death of Charles, the boy Earl, who died of a stone in his heart; and in 1670, when the widowed countess married the unfortunate Earl of Argyle, who afterwards suffered at Edinburgh in the cause of the Covenant, he performed the marriage ceremony at Balcarres, "without proclamation of banns, be virtew of ane order from Mr Sharpe, Archb. of St Andrews."³ Not conforming to Episcopacy⁴ he was confined to his parish, and died on the 26th February, 1672, aged about seventy.

Next follow the two Episcopalian Ministers. WILLIAM HAY, D.D., was a son of William Hay, master of the Music School in Old Aberdeen, and was born in February, 1647. He studied at the University and King's College, and was licensed by Patrick, Bishop of Aber-

¹Lamont's *Diary*, p. 123.

²*Memoir of Lady Anna Mackenzie*, p. 57.

³Lamont's *Diary*, p. 217.

⁴Wodrow's *History*, IV. 329.

deen. He was presented to the charge by Colin, Earl of Balcarres, and having been ordained in October, he was formally admitted on the 19th November, 1673, by Dr Andrew Bruce, Archbishop of St Andrews. He was faithful in the discharge of his duties; and at a visitation in 1677, the session minutes bear that the elders and heads of families gave him a good testimony, and approved of his great affection and zeal.

The story is told of the coxswain of the Duke of York's barge while at Elie falling in love with a young woman of the neighbourhood. They were secretly married by Dr Hay, and as she could not travel openly with her husband in the barge, she allowed herself to be carried off in a barrel, and suspicion was diverted from her by saying that they were taking a swan from Kilconquhar loch up to Holyrood. The song written on the occasion contains the stanza:—

“Oh woe be to Kinneuchar priest,
And ill death may he dee;
He's wed my lass to an English loon,
And that has ruined me.”¹

On the 2nd March, 1684, he preached his farewell sermon from the text, Acts v. 32, “being called and and transplanted to the parsonage of Perth.” He was consecrated Bishop of Moray in the spring of 1688, but did not enjoy his high dignity long, as he “suffered the common fate of his order at the Revolution.”²

ALEXANDER HAY had been precentor and session-clerk in South Leith while a divinity student, and was ad-

¹Wood's *East Neuk of Fife*, p. 206.

²*Minutes of Synod of Fife, 1611-1687*, p. 208.

mitted on the 24th September 1684. An edict had been read in the preceding April in favour of Mr John Munro, parson at Stirling, but this was not proceeded with, for what reason is not stated.

On 8th September, 1689, Mr Hay preached his farewell sermon on Phil. i. 18, as he "was thereafter deposed by the Secret Counsell upon the twelt of September instant, ffor his disloyalty to King William and Queen Mary;" "not praying for their Majesties, but for James VII., and reflecting upon the Estates." He died soon afterwards.

JAMES DRUMMOND had been chaplain to Margaret, Marchioness of Argyle. He was called in April 1691, and the call was signed by several of the heritors and all the elders except one. He was inducted on the 25th June following, having previously received ordination to the ministry. The church was now Presbyterian again, and he received the hand of fellowship from the presbytery, and from the heritors and elders in name of the rest of the congregation. He was a Covenanter and had sustained his full share of persecution, having been fined and imprisoned, and sent to the Bass; but some details of this will be found in the chapter on the Covenanters.

He died on the 29th September, 1699, and he must have been possessed of private means, as he left of free gear £2,271 4s 6d of Scots money.

A call was given by the congregation in December 1699, to Alexander Gillespie, student of divinity, and he preached frequently after this date; but he fell into bad health, and declined the call. In August 1701

the session asked the Earl of Balcarres to issue a second presentation to him, but this was not done; and soon after the Earl presented—

WALTER WILSON, A.M., a son of Mr Alexander Wilson, minister of Cameron, who graduated at St Andrews in 1677. He was ordained at Abercrombie in 1689, from which he was translated to Kilconquhar, and admitted 3rd December, 1701. He died June 8th, 1735, aged about seventy-eight, and in the forty-sixth year of his ministry.

One of his daughters was married to David Myles, minister of Newburn; and it is worth noting that the prefix *Rev.* is first used in the session minutes in reference to his death in 1734. He is called "Rev. Mr David Miles." Previously ministers had been designated *Mr* only, which was not a clerical title, but given to all who had received a University education. In this connection it may also be said that the affix *Esq.* was first used in the minutes in 1754, being given to Mr Dudington of St Ford. Up to that time a heritor was described only as the laird of —, naming his property.

THOMAS AYTONE, the next minister, was licensed by the presbytery of Jedburgh in 1719, and ordained in the following year as minister of Alyth. He was presented to Kilconquhar by Alexander, Earl of Balcarres, and inducted to the charge on November 6th, 1735, his call having been unanimously subscribed by the heritors, elders, feuars, and heads of families. He was famed for his *arcanum*, which cured children of convulsion fits. He published a volume on "The original consti-

tution of the Christian Church," which was replied to by the well known Mr Glas of Tealing. He died 5th January, 1739, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and the nineteenth of his ministry.

JAMES CLIDESDALE was licensed by the presbytery of Edinburgh in 1738, and became chaplain to the Earl of Lauderdale. He was presented to the parish by James, Earl of Balcarres, and was ordained on the 15th November 1739. A call was given to him by the congregation, but it was far from being unanimous; for when a moderation was asked from the presbytery in the previous June there were two petitions presented—one signed by all the heritors, a great number of the heads of families, and four elders, asking that it should be proceeded with; and another, signed by sixteen elders, asking for delay until there should be greater harmony in the parish. The moderation was granted, and on the day appointed a majority of the congregation voted in his favour, but a protest was given in by Robert Morris and eleven other elders. This might well have been regarded as sufficient, yet at the first meeting of session after Mr Clidesdale's ordination, five of the elders insisted on its being recorded in the minute book, that their presence there as elders was not to be construed as approving of his settlement. He died on the 13th March, 1759, in the forty-seventh year of his age and the twentieth of his ministry.

JOHN CHALMERS, D.D., was a grandson of John Chalmers of Pitmedden, and a son of Rev. James Chalmers, minister of Elie. He was ordained at Elie as assistant and successor to his father in 1737, and in 1759 had the

degree of D.D. conferred upon him by the University of St Andrews.

He was presented to Kilconquhar by James, Earl of Balcarres, but his settlement was opposed by nearly the whole congregation. The people had shown themselves restive under the system of patronage at the settlement of the previous minister twenty years before, and now their dissatisfaction reached an acute form. Petitions were presented to the session from all quarters of the parish against his settlement; and the dissentients were supported in their opposition by both the presbytery and synod. The Commission of Assembly sustained the call, and appointed the presbytery to proceed with his translation, but they declined to obey the sentence. It was appealed to the Assembly in 1760, when after a warm debate it was resolved that he should be transported,¹ and accordingly he was admitted on the 19th June 1760. All the elders except one, and the great majority of the members left the congregation, and formed the Relief Church in Colinsburgh. He was superior to many others in ancient learning, yet by a species of buffoonery he could turn into ridicule the most spacious and forcible arguments; and though a person of no small respectability and attainments, great prejudice was excited against him.² He married a daughter of Sir Alexander Anstruther Kt.; and his only son, William, a writer of the Signet in Edinburgh, was known afterwards as William Bethune of Blebo.³ He died 7th April, 1791, in the eightieth year of his age, and the fifty-third of his ministry.

¹Morren's *Annals of the Assembly*, 1760, p. 201.

²Scott's *Fasti*.

³Session Minutes, April 17th, 1791.

ALEXANDER SMALL, M.A., was a graduate of St Andrews, and was licensed by the presbytery there in 1763. He was ordained at Kirkmichael in Perthshire in 1767, from which he was translated to Newtyle in 1778. He was presented to Kilconquhar by Alexander, Earl of Balcarres, to whom he had formerly been tutor, and was inducted to the ministry of the parish on 10th November, 1791. He is said to have been a pious but very absent man. He died on the 27th November, 1812, in the eightieth year of his age and the forty-sixth of his ministry; having had the degree of D.D. conferred upon him only a few months before his death.

WILLIAM FERRIE, D.D., was presented by Alexander, Earl of Balcarres in 1813, but objection was taken to him because he declined to resign the professorship of Civil History in St Andrews University. The case was appealed to the Assembly, and by a majority of 85 to 80 his settlement was sustained, and he was ordained on 3rd February, 1814. He got a new and elegant church built in 1820. A new site on the Colinsburgh road was spoken of, but the brewery which then stood where the church now is was bought, and no better position could be desired. It may be noted here that the handsome stained glass window at the east of the church, and the two new windows on each side of the pulpit, were put in by the late Mr George Russell, Elie Lodge, then in Kincaig, and his three brothers, William, James, and Philip, in memory of their two sisters. Dr Ferrie was mainly instrumental in getting a Chapel of Ease erected at

Largoward, now a *quoad sacra* parish. He was an energetic and laborious minister, whom Dr Chalmers characterized as "the best minister in Fife and the worst professor." He continued the old practice of catechising his members in their various districts in the early part of his ministry, but he had to give this up as he found the people did not relish it. The church was always well attended in his time, as he was most assiduous in visiting his members; and, indeed, irregular hearers stood greatly in awe of him. He died 7th June, 1850, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his ministry.

WILLIAM MILLIGAN, D.D., was a son of the Rev. Dr Milligan of Elie, and was born in 1820. He was a graduate of St Andrews, from which he received the degree of D.D. in 1860. His first charge was the parish of Cameron, and six years after his settlement there he was translated to Kilconquhar, and inducted in 1850. In 1860 he was presented by the Crown to the professorship of Divinity and Biblical Criticism in the University of Aberdeen. For many years he acted as Clerk to the Senatus, and latterly he was one of the General Assembly Clerks. He was the author of many theological works of great value, and had the reputation of being an accurate biblical scholar. He died in Edinburgh, 11th December 1893.

The remaining ministers were ROBERT FLINT, D.D., ordained in Aberdeen in 1859, translated to Kilconquhar, 1862, appointed professor of moral philosophy in St Andrews in 1864, and now professor of divinity in Edinburgh University. WALTER IRVINE, M.A., or-

dailed in Dollar in 1857, translated to Chapel-Garioch in 1859, inducted to Kilconquhar in February, 1866, and died 21st November, 1885. ALEXANDER LEGGE, formerly of St Andrews Church, Dundee, inducted at Kilconquhar June 2nd, 1886.

CHAPTER VI.

The Kirk-Session.

A GREAT deal of interesting information can be gleaned from the old session minutes. They form a complete record from June 1637 to the present day, with the exception of seven years from 1666 to 1673, during the Episcopal period, the blank being caused by the death of the clerk and delay in appointing a successor. The first fifteen volumes, up to 1820, are handsomely bound in leather, with the torn and frayed leaves carefully repaired, and bear this inscription in gilt letters on the outside—"Bound for Preservation at the expence of Archibald Constable of Balniel, MDCCCXXI."

The first entry is the appointment of a clerk,¹ dated 4th June 1637. "The qlk day Mr David Mitchell, for the tyme scholem^r in the ch was receivit and admittit be the minister and elders of the foresaid Session to be

¹The following have been the session clerks and schoolmasters of the parish up to the present time, with the dates of their appointment—David Mitchell, 1637; D. Anderson, 1640; Charles Smart, 1646; Alexander Houston, 1673; Colin Bennet, 1716; William Beat, 1730; Alexander Bayne, 1748; James Wilkie, 1776; John Smith, 1805? Robert Mitchell, 1824; James McLaurin, 1825; Peter Proudfoot, 1854; Thomas Sime, 1868. There was also George Calland, who died in 1593.

reader in ther kirk & clerk of ther session, and that for the space of ane year, and longer if it please the said minister and elders, who promised by the grace of God to be faithful in discharging of the deutes of the said place, and that either by himself or ane other sufficiently qualified for the performance therof."

The mention of "reader" in the above extract recalls an office which has long since been abolished. It was instituted soon after the Reformation in 1560, owing to the scarcity of suitable ministers for all the parishes. It was then common for the minister to have two or three churches under his charge, who maintained public worship in each of them more or less regularly with the help of his reader; and though the General Assembly declared the office to be without warrant the readers were allowed to continue, the ministers finding them so useful, until in 1645 they were discontinued.¹ Their duties were to read the prayers from Knox's liturgy along with portions of scripture, to lead the praise,² and sometimes also to catechise the children. Their service lasted about an hour, between the ringing of the second and third bells, when the minister himself entered the pulpit to preach and expound the scriptures.

The services in the seventeenth century were very protracted. After the reader's service was over, which began not later than ten o'clock and lasted an hour, the

¹McCrie's *Story of the Scottish Church*, p. 166.

²The 1615 edition of the "Book of Common Order" contains twelve tunes which could be sung to all the common metre psalms, and these tunes came to acquire a kind of authority, and used to be looked upon as the only permissible tunes. Indeed many precentors knew no other. They were—Common, King's, Duke's, English, French, London, The Stilt, Dunfermline, Dundee, Abbey, Glasgow, and Martyrs.—From *Notes by Mr R. Shiells, Neenah, Wisc., U.S.*

minister began the usual forenoon's service, which consisted of a lecture and a sermon, besides the singing of psalms, and prayers which were sometimes an hour long. The afternoon service was shorter, as there was then only one discourse; but by this time it was far on in the afternoon, and many an entry is made that there was no session, "being leat when the efternoon sermon endet," or because "few elders did byde." There was then no clock, and it was not till 1681 that they had a sun-dial, which cost them ten merks. They had, however, a half-hour sand glass, which stood near the pulpit, and was turned over by the preacher at least once, and often twice, during the delivery of each discourse. Such lengthened services seem very unnecessary to us now, but it must be remembered that two hundred years ago there was no popular religious literature, that the Sabbath services were practically the only source of spiritual and intellectual stimulus which the people had to lift them above the dull routine of their daily work.

The Sabbath attendance seems to have been very good, for the cases in which persons were censured on account of absence were very few. But half-day hearing was frequently complained of, and the visitors were enjoined to take order with those who went away from the afternoon service. In 1643 it was intimated from the pulpit that children above eight or ten years of age should be brought to church "every Sabbath day, both lads and lasses, otherways their parents should be punished if they bring them not, seeing they have power over them." Promiscuous hearing was an even greater offence than staying at home, as when it is recorded in

1645 that "the minister and elders having considered that many in the remotest parts of the parish did leive ther own kirk upon the Sabbath day, and did resort frequently to the nierest kirk to them, such as the kolliars in the muires, and some of the inhabitants of the towne of Sant Minance, therefor have ordained that the elders in thes parts sall caz observe and delleat those that sall be fund to have gone away after that mainer from ther own kirk. And the Session has ordained that the delinquents in that kind sall pay ilk ane of them, *toties quoties*, 8 sh."

There were frequent complaints about disturbances in public worship. Men were censured for making trouble in the lofts during sermon, or troubling the kirk in the time of preaching. And perhaps this is not to be wondered at when the services were so long; for while the more spiritually-minded worshippers would take delight in the minute discussion of doctrines, those who were compelled to come against their wills, and who had no relish for spiritual things, would find such lengthened exercises a weariness to the flesh.

The Kilconquhar church, like many others in the seventeenth century, had none of the modern comforts to which we are accustomed. It had only an earthen floor,¹ and there was no heating apparatus of any kind. The elders had a fixed seat with a lock and key on the door of it; the heritors had their "desks" or seats, which they put up and maintained at their own expense; the fishermen of Earlsferry and the tenants on the dif-

¹In country churches earthen floors were common even in the present century, and sometimes cobble stones were laid down to enable the people to walk over the damp places.

ferent estates had certain seats allotted to them; and a large part of the area of the church was open, and the people sat there on forms, or on stools which they provided for themselves, and in some cases which they carried to church for their own use. Access to the galleries, or lofts as they were called, was obtained by ladders, for trees were purchased to mend them. The pulpit appears to have been entered directly from the outside by its own door, and it had "an awmry" or press beneath it in which the utensils of the church were kept.

It is no wonder, then, that people sitting, sometimes standing, in a cold, draughty, unheated church should be restless, and should disturb the preacher by their inattention and moving about. But something had to be done, so in 1649 the elders were required to take their turn in sitting in the gallery, and to report the names of those who made any disturbance, "as also those who does goe foorth of the kirk in tyme of sermon, and does not com in quietlie again." That making of a noise in coming back was bad enough, but there was a worse fault still—going out and not coming back at all! For in 1654 two men were summoned before the session "for goeing furth of the kirk and wer fund standing in the kirk yaird in tyme of sermon." They were formally rebuked, and intimation was made from the pulpit that any such loiterers would be liable to the severest censure of the session.

This seems to have secured better order, but in 1732 complaints were heard of the perpetual disturbance made by boys in the Balcarres loft, and of the negli-

gence of the beadle in preventing the same. He excused himself by saying that he was "oblig'd to tell the names of persons to be pray'd for to the precentor;" and it was arranged that in future the elders on duty for the day should do this in his stead. I mention this because of the interesting practice that was once so universal, and which prevailed till quite recently, of persons in illness or other troubles asking the prayers of the congregation on their behalf; and it seems a pity that so becoming a practice has fallen into disuse.

The services in connection with the observance of the Lord's Supper varied much at different times. For long it was held only once a year, usually in July or August; and from 1637 to 1650 it was held on two consecutive days, the first being described as the first Communion for the year, and the Sabbath following the second. From 1650 onwards there was a fast day on the Thursday, a preparation service on the Saturday, the Communion was held on one Sabbath only, and it was followed by a thanksgiving service on the Monday; and this was the universal practice throughout the country until about thirty years ago.

As might be expected, the services on Communion occasions in former times were as prolonged as on ordinary Sabbaths, and a large number of ministers took part in them. For instance, in 1705 a lecture and two sermons were preached on the fast day, two sermons on the Saturday, two on Sabbath, besides others from the tent outside, and two thanksgiving sermons on the Monday; and the assistants on the occasion were the ministers of Largo, Elie, Pittenweem, Kingsbarns, Crail,

and Edinburgh. On the Sabbath morning Mr Wilson, the minister of the congregation, preached what was called the "action sermon;" then he gave an address which was called "fencing the tables," in which he warned unbelievers, or any who might be living in the practice of known sin, not to come forward lest they should eat and drink judgment to themselves, while those who cherished love to the Saviour were heartily welcomed.

For the ordinance itself tables covered with white cloths and seats were set up in the area of the church in front of the pulpit, at which the communicants sat. There would be from sixty to eighty persons seated together, and the tables would be filled eight or ten times. Mr Wilson himself served the first table by offering prayer and giving a short address before the elements of bread and wine were distributed by the elders. As the members first served went out others came in and took their places until all who wished to communicate had been served; a psalm was sung while the changes were made, and the other ministers present took their share of the work, each serving a table in turn.

Besides the services in the church there was also preaching carried on in the open air, so that those who had already observed the sacrament or were waiting their turn to do so, might be profitably employed. A "tent" was erected in the churchyard—not a canvas tent for all the worshippers, such as is now used for evangelistic services, flower shows, or similar outdoor gatherings. It was a small wooden platform from which the ministers

spoke to the people standing or sitting round them, and it had a covering over it, which served as a sounding board, and as a protection to the preachers from the sun or a passing shower. It was put up specially for each Communion occasion, and entries occur often in the books of small sums paid for wood and nails to repair it; and in 1718 a new tent was made to replace the old one.

The first reference to Communion tokens was in 1656, when John Mackie was paid twenty-eight shillings "for making the tickets," as tokens were at that time called; and most probably they were only pieces of lead, with the initial of the parish roughly stamped upon them. In 1705 John Mathison, Kilconquhar, was paid £9 for the making of a new set, and the entry regarding them, made a fortnight after they were first used is, "the number of those tokens are one thousand and thretty-eight, they were all given in to the session with the stamps, and roalled up altogether in a bagg."¹ The later one is neatly cut, with the representation of a church upon it, dated 1820, the year when the present church was built, and having the Rev. Wm. Ferrie's name on the reverse.

The tokens were usually distributed to the intending communicants in the session house on the fast day, and on the Saturday before the ordinance was observed; and sometimes the elders distributed them in their several quarters. In 1705 the members living north of Balcarres met at Lathallan to receive them,

¹Rev. Thomas Burns, F.R.S.E., Edinburgh, author of "Old Scottish Communion Plate," has a specimen of the 1705 token in his possession.

others obtained them at Kilconquhar, and the rest at Earlsferry. The Communion roll does not seem to have been regularly kept at that time, for in 1729, the elders were appointed to take lists of all the persons in their several quarters who designed to communicate, "for the better order in delivering their Tokens than formerly."

At the induction of a new minister it was customary to take an inventory of the kirk utensils. These included in 1673 two bread platters, two flagons and linen table cloths for the Lord's Supper, with a basin and linen cloths for baptism, but there were then no communion cups. The presbytery at a visitation held in 1677 recommended the heritors to provide three or four, but this was not done; and the cups were borrowed for many years, as late as 1737, from Newburn parish, and the beadle was always paid for his trouble in going for them and returning them, as well as for his extra work in putting up the tables for the service. In 1683 Rev. William Hay, one of the Episcopalian ministers, presented the congregation with a cup, "This day the minister did present to the church and sessione ane silver goblet gifted by himself for the com'union service of the parish, and ordaindit to be keeped by the succceeding ministers for all time coming; it is marked with the name and armes of himself & his wife."

When Mr Alexander Hay, the next minister, was deposed by the Privy Council in 1689, after the Revolution, he seems to have taken this cup away with him. The elders must either have been deposed also,

or more likely, have resigned in sympathy with him; for in December of that year there were no elders to distribute the poor's money, and it was arranged that the collections should be distributed by "some of the well affected" in the parish. In September 1690 a new session was formed, and when they met to take over the utensils of the church this silver cup was found awanting; "which the late incumbent either had in his own custody, or had delivered to Charles Bennet when he delivered to him the poor's box with the bonds of the money belonging to the poor." The box was recovered, though many of the bonds were lost and had to be renewed by the borrowers; and the silver cup was also restored, and has been used ever since by the congregation. It was renewed in 1833 in Dr Ferrie's time, when a similar cup was presented by General Lindsay of Balcarres, and other two by the heritors. Mr Hay's name is still upon the one he gave, but not his arms.

The care of the poor was one of the most important duties of the kirk-session, and it cost them much time and anxious thought. Under date May 13th, 1638, the following curious resolution was come to—"This Sabbath, the minister, gentlemen and elders being present, ordained that a bier be mad for poor folks that has not money to buy a kist, that the session be no mor troubled in paying for kists to such." This may have the look of harshness, but the minutes bear ample evidence that the session did not grudge trouble, but were tender and considerate in their oversight of the poor.

Grants were made almost every Sabbath from the

church door collections in cases of necessity, and they met specially at fixed intervals to make the regular grants. The poor were provided with "grays" and "plaiding" for clothing, and meal as well as money were systematically distributed. Entries often occur of sums of money being paid to persons whose names were not given, or who were known only to the minister or some of the heritors—evidently gentlemen who had been in prosperous circumstances, but who were then reduced to poverty by the troubles of the Covenanted time. Such entries as "a broken merchant," "a ship broke man," "four Irische gentlewomen," "a Frenchman who was once a priest," "a stranger that came from Irland, shee being a minister's wyfe, her husband killed in Irland in his chamber in the night by many robbers," show the width of their sympathies.

Special collections were often made for particular cases, as in 1658 £10 Scots were contributed "for the relieffe of ane poor boy whoe is mightilay desseased of ane sar craigie," and who was sent to Edinburgh for treatment by the doctors. Complaints are often heard nowadays about the number of extra collections in all our churches, but these were as numerous in the seventeenth century. The Convention of the Estates often required collections to be made throughout Scotland, and similar instructions were frequently given by the General Assembly and the local presbytery. The new pier at Anstruther, the harbours at Burntisland and Aberdeen, bridges at Dumbarton and elsewhere, were all helped in this way. And our countrymen abroad were not forgotten, as when collections were made for

the Scots church in New York in 1724, or for a church for the use of Scottish Protestants in Koningsberg in Prussia, under the protection of the Prince Elector of Brandenburg in 1697.

Our admirable system of fire insurance was not in existence two centuries ago, but the principle was carried out by having collections made for those whose houses had been burned, in places so far apart as St Monance, St Andrews, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Help was also given to prisoners taken at Dunbar, to certain persons taken by the Turks at Algiers, to fishermen robbed by Algerian pirates off Plymouth, to the widows in the parish whose husbands had belonged to the regiment of Lord Balcarres, and had been killed in action.

The kirk-session was then virtually the banker of the parish. Members in need of a temporary loan obtained it on their note of hand, and for a moderate rate of interest. The invested funds were generally lent on bond to the heritors, whose estates were often heavily burdened, and the interest was sometimes paid in money, or in meal at market rates, delivered as required.

The money was kept in an iron-bound box, of which there were two keys, but it was not always a place of security; for in 1705 it was stolen out of the session house, with £9 12s 4d of Scots money in it. They then kept two boxes, which they called the old and the new, the one to contain the current revenue, and the other the bonds and capital sums. But in 1710 the old box was stolen out of the elder's house who had charge of it, with £22 11s 0d of Scots

money in it; and "the empty box was found in the stank at the west end of John Burt's croft" in Kilconquhar, but in neither case were the thieves discovered. Perhaps it was the remembrance of these losses that led the presbytery, at a visitation of the congregation in 1716, to tell the minister and elders that if any of the poor's money were lost they should answer for it.

At the close of the Covenanted struggle in 1689 the session had great difficulty in raising the needful funds. Many of the heritors had ceased to attend the church, being disaffected to the government of William and Mary, and as a consequence the weekly collections fell off very much, and were described as "very mean." The elders went through the parish to see what the people would give voluntarily, but finally regular assessments had to be made. In 1697 it was two and a half lippies of meal on each hundred pounds of rent, the one half to be paid by proprietors and the other half by tenants; while in 1731 it was two shillings sterling on every £100 Scots of rent, the tenants paying two shillings sterling for each plough, of which there were fifty-five, and the heads of families according to their ability.

The poor were expected to provide for themselves as far as possible. They were divided into two classes—those who were able to travel through the parish to seek their own supply, and those who could not do this, who received so much a week at their own homes. In April 1699 the session and heritors ordered a hundred badges for the beggar's to be made by John

Mathison, the smith in Kilconquhar. They were made of lead, with the name of the parish on one side, and the name of the bearer on the other. This was to distinguish the poor of the parish from strangers, and the latter were sharply dealt with, for they were required to remove out of the parish within a fortnight, and intimation was made that they would be cast out if they remained, and landlords who might let houses to such were to be fined—all this being conform to an order of the justices of the peace. In 1724 the wandering poor were provided with badges of parchment, written by the session clerk, and there were then eighteen of them.

One way in which poor men were assisted was by purchasing a horse for them, so that they might earn a livelihood as carriers. The roads in the seventeenth century were very rough, quite unsuitable for wheeled traffic, and coals and farm produce were usually carried by pack horses. Sums of from £12 to £18 Scots were paid for this purpose, which gives an idea of the price of horses at that time. In 1741 a horse was bought for one of the elders, who had lost his and had not the means to buy another, for three guineas—a much larger sum, but in this case it was stipulated that the animal was to remain the property of the session.

It was resolved in 1723 to institute the office of deacon in the parish, as recommended by the General Assembly. Of the first seven ordained in June of that year, two of them—Charles Ireland and Philip Jervise, belonged to Colinsburgh.

The charge of educational matters in the parish was also an important part of session work. In 1640 it was resolved that all the poor children should be sent to school and paid for out of the collections, and in 1733 it was required that those thus paid for should attend the public school, unless they were unable to travel to it. The public school was always in Kilconquhar, and for many years it was held in a house rented for the purpose. In 1697 it was resolved that a school with a house for the teacher should be built out of the vacant stipend for 1689 and 1690, which was only then paid up. The contract was given to John Fair, mason and wright, and the price agreed upon was £250 Scots, lime, sand, stone, and timber, great and small, being provided by the heritors. It was to be 38 feet long by 14 in breadth. It was to have two hewn doors beneath and one above, an outside stone stair, and five hewn windows, each four and a half feet high, with jousts, flooring, roof, partitions, doors, windows and window cases, and four chimneys. It does not seem, however, to have been built, for in 1720 the session bought a house and yard from the heirs of James Hutton, Kilconquhar, so that they might be free of the yearly rent of £50 Scots previously paid; but it was sold in 1732, being found too small for the number of children in attendance. In 1743 the project of building another was again spoken of, when it was said that they had paid rent from time immemorial. The present schoolhouse was built about 1820, and has since been enlarged. At the same time the schoolmaster's house was got, which had been a malt-barn and was converted into a dwelling-house.

The old school was the house next to the teacher's house on the east. In 1698 the schoolmaster's salary was a hundred pounds Scots, paid equally by the heritors and session.

In 1656 it was resolved to build a school at Rires, and to lay aside two shillings sterling weekly for the purpose, but I cannot learn whether this was ever done. In 1686 Alexander Robb, indweller in Earlsferry, obtained liberty to set up a school there, as it was felt that Kilconquhar was at too great a distance; and the session resolved to pay ten merks to him as well as to the teachers in the moors yearly. Fees were also paid for children taught in Colinsburgh.

It was not till 1824 that a public school was built in Earlsferry. The Rev. Dr Ferrie had long lamented the want of one in that part of the parish, and having obtained a grant of the ground he collected subscriptions and had a school built to hold 200 children. He wrote an account of this in the minute book with his own hand, and specially provided that the teacher was always to belong to the Church of Scotland, and that he was to be dismissed if he should allow it to be used for any other meeting than in connection with the parish church.

CHAPTER VII.

Church Discipline.

THE duties of the kirk-session in former times, as we have already shown, were many and varied. Besides having charge of the purely spiritual affairs of the congregation, such as the administration of ordinances, sessions were virtually courts of justice in respect to the morals of the people. They claimed jurisdiction over the whole parish, having power to summon any one before them, and were thus practically police courts in inferior matters. The distinction between Church and State was not then so sharply defined as it is now; and while they do not seem to have had any legal right to inflict civil penalties, such as fines and imprisonment, they did this also, either by requiring the magistrates to punish offenders, or by doing it themselves in virtue of the bailies or justices of the peace being usually also members of the session.

A great deal has often been said about the severity of church discipline in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but this was unavoidable, the necessity for it being so clamant. A sad laxity of morals prevailed in

Roman Catholic times, and we need not wonder at this, when so many of the higher clergy as well as the priests, though pledged to celibacy, left natural children behind them. The Reformers justly regarded it as one of the scriptural duties of the church to suppress vice and to encourage virtue, and strong repressive measures in the kirk session as well as much teaching from the pulpit were needful before this could be accomplished. For example, before the Reformation a system of what was called "handfasting" prevailed, by which two persons made a partnership for a year. The man took the woman by the hand, and said to her that she was his wife, while she said he was her husband; and then at the end of the year they were at liberty to marry, to live singly, or to enter into other relationships.¹ They were thus married *de facto* but not *de jure*, and as a consequence the marriage tie was by many lightly regarded, and the Reformers had to insist on these handfasted persons being legally married in the face of the church; and this was one reason why marriages were so often celebrated on the Sundays towards the close of the sixteenth century.

While sessions were severe in dealing with others, they were not less strict with themselves. The elders were expected to attend the weekly meetings of session faithfully, and excuses for absence were not readily sustained, absent members being fined. If any of them were chargeable with fault they were sharply dealt with, either by suspension for a lengthened period or by deposition; and the minister himself was sometimes placed at the bar, as when in 1645 he had to pay twenty shil-

¹Maxwell's *Bygone Scotland*, p. 173.

lings Scots into the penalty box "for swearing that was in his house be his servants."

Besides the many breaches of the seventh commandment numerous cases of Sabbath profanation had to be dealt with. In 1637 intimation was made from the pulpit against masking and leading of corn on the Sabbath day, "except in caise of great necessitie." But the members of session were themselves the judges of the necessity, and offenders were summoned before them in the usual way, and they never escaped without an admonition. Not a few of these were caused by the drinking customs of the time, for excessive drinking was only too prevalent. The majority of the people had long distances to walk to the church, for the parish is a large one; the services were protracted, so that refreshments of some kind were required, and no objection was taken to this; but many sat drinking during the time of public worship, and went home in the evening the worse of it. On one occasion in 1637, the matter came before the session in this way. After the meeting had been constituted, or in the phraseology of that time, "after incalling upon the name of God, the visitors being asked what misorders they had found, said they had found none, neither before noon nor after." But there had been such for all that, for the minister was informed by some of the elders "that those who wer myndet to stay from the kirk in the efter noone for to drink had ther privie spyes and watchers to advertise them of the comeing of the visitors, during which tyme they kept themselves quiet in houses, untill they wer departed, and then they went to ther drinking."

Accordingly public warning was given from the pulpit that there was to be no sitting in "brewster houses" after the third bell had rung, until after the services were over, under the penalties usually inflicted for such offences. One man made a narrow escape, for when he was summoned before the session, "he declared that the pynt of aill had been filled befor the ringing of the third bell, and instantly after they had endet it." He was allowed to leave with a caution to be more careful in future.

In 1645 it was resolved that tippling and drinking on the Sabbath day should be censured and punished as Sabbath breaking; "and it was ordainet that if any sall be fund sitting in alehouses drinking after 5 hours at even in summer they sall be censured, and if any suld be fund in winter after 4 hours, they suld be in lykman-ner punished." Very properly the sellers of the ale were held equally guilty, and the penalties for both were fixed by an act of the General Assembly; they were to be rebuked before the session for a first offence, publicly before the congregation for a second, and in case of a third to be suspended from partaking of the Lord's Supper. In 1647 all the brewsters or sellers of ale in the moors and the landward part of the parish were summoned before the session, and "admonished not to sell any drink upon the Sabbath day to any saiffe as much as serves for refreshment, or to those that sends for it to their own houses, under a penalty of 4 lb."

There were many other forms of Sabbath desecration. The fishermen of Earlsferry were frequently delated for

such offences as "the breaking and cutting down of a ship's boat that came in by sea," evidently the remains of a wreck; "for going to Leith with their boat and fishes on the last Sabbath morning;" for "bringing home a sail out of Largo parish;" "for laying of their nets on the Sabbath in the time of the drave;" "for their servants and bairnes gathering of bait on the Sabbath morning;" for "profaning the Sabbath by the running of brandy, even in time of divine worship," as if smuggling might be tolerated on other days; for "fishing in the fore noone on Fasting Thursday,"—for fast-days were kept as strictly as the Sabbaths, whether these were the ordinary fasts kept before observing the Lord's Supper, or special ones appointed by royal command or instructions of the General Assembly. Farmers were summoned for loading corn, and leading in from the harvest fields, for "causing of corn to be carried out of the toun betwixt sermons," and "for niffering horses" on the Sabbath day. Men were dealt with for delving on a Sabbath morning, for carrying burdens "in tyme of preaching," for "carrying packs on the Sabbath night at even at the sunne going down." Women were rebuked for carrying in water and "burdines of coalls" on the Lord's day, for "keeping some cloath att the watter on ane Sabbath day," and very frequently for masking or otherwise preparing linen for bleaching early on the Monday morning. A woman was rebuked in 1719 for putting her child's clothes out to dry, her excuse being that her fire had gone out. Another was found winding lint on the Sabbath—an unfortunate thing for her, as the lint was forfeited for the use of the kirk.

One is apt to wonder if these grave elders had any sense of humour, or if there was a smile on the clerk's face as he recorded the case of the woman from St Monance, who was summoned for profaning the Sabbath by washing on that day, and who had to pay half a merk of penalty, though she had only "washed a pair of boys' breeks that had fallen into the sea the Saturday night before." Or of that matron from Kilconquhar who "being called and compeiring confest that shee was absent from the church, and said that shee could not come for making her child's breakfast, which the session esteimed no reasonable excuse, but becaus it was found that shee did not usually absent her self from the church shee was dismiss with a privat rebuk upon her promise to attend the ordinances better in tyme coming." Another such case was that of one who was summoned to appear for weighing butter on the Lord's day, and who explained that some soldiers had come into her house and compelled her, threatening to do her bodily harm if she did not give it to them. The session apparently were not quite satisfied, but as they knew her to be a "timorous person," they passed it over with a private rebuke.

Perhaps it may be thought that such forms of Sabbath desecration were only minor offences, and which might well have been passed over without a formal citation; but disregard of the Sabbath was so general that persistent efforts had to be put forth, and strong measures employed, before it came to be regarded as a day of rest and worship. For the profanation of the Sabbath was one of the miserable legacies which the Reformers in-

herited from those who had gone before them. In the later days of Popery abuses and corruptions of all kinds had crept into the church, the priests had no moral influence over their people, public worship was only a form to be hurried through as easily as possible, and the Sabbath was regarded as a public holiday.

There was much drinking in alehouses as well as private dwellings, marriage feasts were often scenes of wild disorder, games and pastimes were generally indulged in, such as quoits, "playing at the putting stone, and the lyke." Sunday travelling, wandering about in the fields, leaving home in the afternoon with cattle or goods so as to reach the markets early on Monday morning, children playing in the streets, were justly regarded as forms of Sabbath profanation, and magistrates were frequently asked to put civil statutes against these things into execution. The cases dealt with were far more numerous in the seventeenth century than in the eighteenth, showing that a marked improvement had taken place; and the Covenanters are justly entitled to the credit of this, for during the Episcopal period in the parish, when the Messrs Hay were the ministers, there was scarcely any discipline at all, for only cases of gross immorality were taken up and censured.

Another evil of the time calling for discipline was scolding and "flyting," the worse offenders in this respect, I grieve to say, being of the gentler sex. Men were often brought up for fighting and quarrelling, in most cases when they were under the influence of strong drink; and while this can never be any excuse it forms at least an explanation of their conduct, but

this cannot be said of the women, for only in rare instances were they charged with drunkenness as well as scolding. Usually such cases were "delaited" to the session by the elders of the quarter in which the persons lived, for it was their duty to report all the scandals that came to their knowledge; but delinquents were also accused by the persons injured, either to vindicate their own good name from unfounded accusation, or it is to be feared, for purposes of revenge. One woman in 1640 complained of a neighbour "that she did calumniate her very evil, and strike her very cruelly in her own mother's house," and the charge was sustained, due punishment being inflicted. In 1697 a baker in Colinsburgh charged two women in the Ferry for calumniating him, "in saying that he was about to put violent hand in himself, because the pryce of the victuall were become cheaper." Several witnesses were examined in the case, but no one could be found to say that she had actually heard the words spoken, each saying that some one else had told her. After protracted investigation the session saw that no sure probation could be obtained, and thought fit to proceed no farther in it.

In 1645 an aggravated case of the kind came before them from St Monance. The minister reported that along with the moderator of the presbytery, "he did cognosce and try the flyters of St Monance, and because that in the flyting they accused one and other of witchcraft the maitter was referrit to the presbyterie." The ministers in the East of Fife were certainly not reluctant to deal with witches at an earlier period than

this, even to the extent of burning or drowning them;¹ but fortunately there were only accusations here, and the presbytery "ordainet the said flyters to make their repentance for scandall, as is used in cases of scandall, and that they sall be bitterlie reprov'd for challenging one and others of witchcraft in their flyting." It is worth noting that in the session records which I examined most carefully—for a period of about a hundred years—I only met with one case of theft; and that was a woman in Colinsburgh who had stolen a small quantity of meal from a neighbour's house while the family were at church. There was a case in which a man accused a neighbour of calling him a thief, but the latter denied it, declaring that he only said that the spade that his accuser had been using was very like one that had been stolen from him.

The punishments inflicted for such offences were of various kinds. Sometimes they were lenient enough, as when a man who struck his wife with a pair of tongs was only privately rebuked, because that had been the first discord between them. And very wisely, a woman charged with flyting, who was not always in her right

¹In August 1643, Mr David Monro, who was then minister, was appointed by the Presbytery, along with other two ministers, "to goe to Anstruther Wester to see the execution of some witches there; and that they goe to Anstruther Easter and Craill to speak with some quho are apprehended for witches." The presbytery at the same time resolved that they were to be advertised before any witches be executed.—*Minutes of the Presbytery of St Andrews*, 1641-1698, p. 13.

In the Statistical Account of the parish by Dr Ferrie, published in 1845, in speaking of the loch, he says, "A famous witch of Pittenweem is said to have been drowned here, and the loch appears to have had swans in it at that time:—

They took her to Kinniuchar Loch,
And threw the limmer in,
And a' the swans took to the hills,
Scar'd with the unhaely din."

wits, was not even called before the session, the minister being asked to speak with her in private.

The most usual penalty was that of a public rebuke in the face of the congregation, a fine varying from 3s 4d to three or four pounds of Scots money being frequently added; and as these sums were given to the poor the session seem to have been glad in this way to replenish their sometimes scanty exchequer. Requests were occasionally made by delinquents for liberty to sit in their usual seats, and to stand there while being rebuked, but it was only in a very few exceptional cases that this favour was granted. The usual seat was the repentance stool, where men and women had to sit during the whole service; and the number of such public appearances was graduated according to the measure of guilt, one only being required for such offences as flyting or drunkenness, three or more times for immorality, while one poor creature for an aggravated case of adultery had to sit no fewer than twenty-seven times before being absolved. In aggravated cases the culprits had to sit in a sackcloth gown, which the session provided for the purpose.

The repentance stool was not just what might be expected from the use of the word. It was rather a small gallery, raised so high as to be in sight of the entire congregation, access being had to it by a series of steps. In 1731 it was agreed that "the repenting stool above the largest door of the kirk" should be taken away, both because of its inconvenience, being situated so high, especially for women, and because they found delinquents obstinate in refusing to appear

upon it. Accordingly it was resolved to have a movable stool made to stand before the pulpit, above the other stools in the body of the kirk. Entries occur in the accounts at varying intervals of sums paid for repairs, planks of wood, and nails from the smith; and one is tempted to think that the culprits would give it a vicious kick in coming down, when the congregation were dispersing, as the only possible means of venting their spite. The shame of such an appearance was added to on one occasion in 1692, when a worse case of impurity than usual was reported to the presbytery; and in accordance with their instructions he was "appointed to stand at the church door barefoot the next Lord's day, betwixt the second and last bell, and from thence to appear publicly on the pillar *pro primo*."

There were also punishments of a more drastic kind. In 1641 a woman who had calumniated another was ordained "to stand in the chanzie¹ at the east kirk doore the nixt Sabbath between the second and third bell." And in the same year two women convicted of being "flytters and feighters" were sentenced, the one to the belt and the other to the joughs; the one of them, however, having the option of a fine, for she was to pay twenty shillings "if shee goe not to the belt." A certain Janet from the Ferry was not so fortunate four years later, as she had not only to stand in the belt and

¹The "chanzie," or chain, was probably another name for the joughs. It is impossible to say now what the "belt" was, for it seems to have been a local word, and antiquarian authorities know nothing of it. It may also have been the joughs, or perhaps a leather band passed round the waist. The "joughs" were a hinged iron collar fixed to the outside wall of the church by a chain and staple, and which was put round the person's neck and padlocked. It is said that the people entering the church had the privilege of spitting in the culprit's face, and he would be further annoyed by their jeers and mocking smiles.

to take her place on the repentance pillar but had to pay a fine of forty shillings as well. A man accused of bawling and scolding was likewise put in the belt; and in 1706 a woman who had denied her sin, and who had forged a letter to support a false accusation, "was appointed to be put in the belt the next Lord's day, betwixt the second and last bell in the fore noon, and then to compeer before the session in the after noon, and if she did still continue obstinate she was appointed to stand in the belt two or three Lord's days." The session did not always inflict these punishments at their own hands—at least in point of form,—for they sometimes appointed the bailies to put them in the belt, or referred them to the justices of the peace to be put in the stocks!

In 1639 a man guilty of impurity and of showing a false certificate of baptism, was ordained by the minister, heritors and elders to be put in the stocks, and therein to remain until some course should be taken with him. A week after it was resolved that he should be sent out of the bounds, as the most convenient course, in respect of the troubles of the time. He was sent to the south by sea, either to Berwick or Edinburgh, and a sum of £3 12s 6d Scots was paid for his passage money and that of the man who took him away; and five shillings were paid for bread and ale to him while he was in the stocks. In 1706 the town officer of Earlsferry was paid 6s 8d for putting a man in the tolbooth and in the stocks.

Corporal punishment was also resorted to, as when some children found playing at "the tages" on the

Sabbath were ordained to be corrected by the beadle. Again, in 1649 this entry occurs:—"It is appoyntit be the wholl sessione that (naming a man and woman) should be scorged by the hand of the hangman for their scandoulous conversing together."

There seems to have been a feeling in the minds of many of the culprits that the making of their repentance, as it was called, formed a just equivalent for their offences, whatever these were. But the ministers and elders had a much higher idea of discipline. The public appearances, both on the repentance stool and at the church door, were not only a punishment but were designed to awaken a sense of shame within them, as well as to prove a warning to others. No doubt such public exposure would be a crushing humiliation to many a tender heart, but it would have a hardening effect on others, filling them with a sense of bitter resentment. Yet dry and technical as the minutes are, they often bear witness to a tender consideration on the part of the members of session. One is reported to be "verrie penitent," and another to have "behaved herself christianly and shewed sense of guilt;" while the brazen impenitence of others is noted with regret.

There was one case of blasphemy in 1656 against a piper in Earlsferry. One witness "declaired that he hard the said pyper swear by the bread of God and be his wounds." A second witness "declaired that he hard the said pyper say, the devell take him soull and bodie." He was required to make declaration of his repentance in the usual way.

Another noticeable feature is the pertinacity with which the kirk-session followed up the cases until due satisfaction had been rendered. If one citation was disregarded another was ordered to be sent at the next meeting, and for weeks together it was recorded that so and so had failed to appear, or that such a one had discontinued his repentance. In cases of contumacy the help of the presbytery was invoked, and that court occasionally caused the accused persons to be imprisoned; and in the rare occasions in which its authority was insufficient, the appeal to the civil magistrate was always effectual. And this applied not only to compearance before the session, but to the endurance of the appointed punishment.

The same persistence was carried out in obtaining confessions of guilt. It is a strong temptation to a man to tell a falsehood in order to screen himself, and this was often done, and even repeated several times; but besides the charge of the other party involved there must have been circumstances known to the elders pointing to his guilt. In almost every case a full confession was made, and it was only in very rare instances and with great reluctance that resource was had to an oath of purgation, though occasionally a scandal was allowed to remain unpurged until further light should be cast on the matter.

As an instance of this, a trooper who was quartered in Colinsburgh in 1706 courted a girl of the place, and their scandalous carriage brought them under the notice of the kirk-session. He had deceived the girl by asserting that he was unmarried, and he persisted in this state-

ment before the session on several occasions, declaring that he had been married, but that his wife was now dead. Unhappily for him his wife came soon after to Colinsburgh, and on the following Sunday it was reported "that he had beaten her so severely that she was not like to live." But she did not die.

Another instance in 1734 may be given. The beadle's wife had been frequently dealt with for being drunk and disorderly, and after private remonstrances had failed she was summoned before the session, and appointed to be rebuked before the congregation, but she flatly refused to submit. A few weeks afterwards she was summoned again, but "she told them with the old positive air that she would not do it." The next step was to summon the beadle himself, and he was informed that they thought it would have a tendency to make her more flexible if they suspended him for a time, not only from the duties but from the emoluments of his office. They reminded him that it would be a bad precedent if their own dependents did not submit to their decisions, to which he replied that he did not know it was in their power, and he left their presence with the parting shot that his wife would have got more justice in any other court of the kingdom. Nothing daunted the session resolved to suspend him, *una voce*; and they triumphed, for a fortnight afterwards the lady appeared and was rebuked before the congregation.

The church officers seem to have been well paid, for besides a fixed salary they received fees at baptisms and

burials, and they were also grave diggers.¹ One was often the worse of drink, which the session "looked on as the effects of too large an income of money from his office." Under date October 12th, 1645, there is the entry:—"This day James Lardes, kirk officer, received ten pounds for his fee. Also the gentellmen and elders did give him three dollars to buy him a cloak, because he is an obedient servant to them. But not that he sould mak ane use of it to look for as much ane other tyme."

Some of these acts of discipline may seem unduly severe to us now, but there was a coarseness of manner and feeling and an amount of open sin two hundred years ago which happily does not exist now, or at least to anything like the same extent. Perhaps a good many of the cases brought before the session might have been more profitably dealt with by a private expostulation on the part of the minister; but we need not hesitate to give these old men credit for good intentions, and an earnest desire to further the spiritual welfare of the people. They only did their duty, carrying out the instructions of the church; and even their severities were supported by the best men of the times in which they lived.

¹In regard to funerals it may be noted that in 1641 the session, acting on the instructions of the presbytery, ordained among other things "that all those who superstitiously carries the dead about the kirk before burial, and also the burying of unbaptised bairnes apart, be censured by the session."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Covenanters in the Parish.

AS Colinsburgh was not founded till shortly before the Covenanting struggle came to an end in 1688, its inhabitants did not suffer in the persecutions. And this is the less likely that Earl Colin was not only an Episcopalian but also a warm friend of the government, and his tenants and dependants were likely to be found for the most part on the same side.

But the few inhabitants of Nether Rires were Covenanters, being members of the parish church, for the National Covenant was read and sworn by the congregation in April 1638, in Dr Monro's time. This covenant was first drawn up in 1581, and was chiefly an abjuration of popery and a solemn engagement to uphold the Protestant religion, and to resist all innovations. The Solemn League and Covenant was a bond between Scotland and England for the preservation of the reformed religion in the church of Scotland, the reformation of religion in England and Ireland according to the word of God, and the extirpation of popery and prelacy.¹ This covenant was drawn up in 1643, and was taken by

¹ Johnston's *Treasury of the Scottish Covenant*, p. 97.

the congregation here in that year, and again in 1648, when Mr Forret was minister. Most of the people no doubt did so willingly, but spiritual freedom was not understood then as it is now; and not only were all the members required to sign, but a great deal of pressure was brought to bear on those who were reluctant to do so. Intimation was made from the pulpit that those who had not sworn and subscribed on the appointed day were required to be present on the following day for that purpose. Sir Robert Murray, along with several others, subscribed it on a later day. In the kirk-session records in March 1649 there is this entry, "This day the laird of Kilbrackmonth made declaration of his repentance for his malignitie, and did swear and subscribe the covenant." Alexander, the first Earl of Balcarres, signed it before the presbytery in April 1649.

The entire Scottish people were Covenanters until the unhappy split among them took place at the time of *The Engagement* in 1647, and the cause was warmly espoused by the Kilconquhar congregation; and indeed, excepting during the Episcopal period, the kirk-session seem to have been on the Covenanting side all through the fifty years' struggle. An army of thirty thousand men had been raised from all the lowland counties of Scotland under General Leslie, and in the campaigns of 1639 and 1640 had easily vanquished the king's troops. In 1645 a contingent went from Kilconquhar to join Argyle's army against the Marquis of Montrose, and some of the men, though willing enough to sign the covenants, were not so ready to fight for them, but the kirk-session made them do it. For example, at a day of fasting and hum-

iliation on account of the civil war held on the 26th March, "ther was ane act read forgainst those that was defishient of puting out of ther men that day, it was ordained that the minister and the laird of Kilbrackmont sould goe to Sant Minnance and see if they could gett them put out; and lykwys this sould be done in the ferry, and if they wold not goe forth that order sould be taken with them ther."

On 29th June "the laird of Rires having declaired to the sessione that ther was souldires come from the armie in the north, and that they wer resait be ther parants and friends in this parish, the sessione therefor did ordine that thai sould be sent back againe with all diligence under the paine of the penalties sett doune in the acts of the com'ity of warre theranent, and did ordine that searche and tryall sould be made for finding of them out and sending of them back again." A few days afterwards the laird of Rires again complained of four men who belonged to the parish who were still absent, and they also were to be searched for. An Act of Parliament was read from the pulpit "that all gentellmen and heritours and fensibelman in this shyr" should be at the rendezvous at Perth on the 21st July.

In 1648 the session showed themselves to be on the side of the strict Covenanters, for in December of that year they ordained that all the soldiers in the parish who had gone to England in the *sinful engagement* should come before the congregation and make declaration of their repentance. The session distributed 515 merks among the widows in the parish, whose husbands

had been "killed in my lord Crawford's regiment and Balcarres' Regiment."

These wars of the covenant led to a famine in the country, caused largely by the great number of ploughmen and small farmers who were killed, or whose absence led to the neglect of farm work; and with the famine came its frequent attendant—the pestilence. There was no sickness in Kilconquhar as there was in other places in Fife, but precautions had to be taken against it. The fishermen of Earlsferry were not allowed to go across in their boats to the Lothians without a warrant from the minister, or from either of the lairds of KinCraig or Sandford, and the bailies were required to see that no one coming from the other side in cobbles or boats should be allowed to land until they were examined and found to be free of the plague. And the laird of Lathallan was not allowed to come to the church for a time, "because of some received in his house that came from St Andrews in the time of the infection there."¹

Mr Forret, the minister, did not suffer for his principles any further than being confined to his parish, probably on account of his friendship with the Balcarres family; but his successor, Mr James Drummond, was not so fortunate. Nothing is known of his early life, except that while a probationer he was chaplain to the Marchioness of Argyle, whose husband was the first martyr for presbytery after the restoration of Charles the Second. In 1674 Drummond was imprisoned in the tolbooth of Edinburgh for preaching in

¹Session Minutes, Oct. 5th, 1645, and Sept. 12th, 1647.

private houses, but in the same year he was set at liberty on engaging not to keep any conventicles in future.¹ This was a course which very few of the outed ministers would take, as they felt bound by their loyalty to God to preach whenever an opportunity presented itself; and Mr Drummond very soon regretted the promise he had made. Probably it was on account of fear that he took the bond, as so many laymen did at that time; but after reflection, "not feeling the promise to be binding, the keeping of which he believed would be to commit sin, he resumed preaching, both in houses and in the fields, on being released."²

He was again imprisoned at Glasgow, and in January 1677 he appeared before a committee of the Privy Council, and admitted having preached in houses and conventicles, notwithstanding his former engagement. He was virtually offered his liberty if he would renew his bond not to preach, but he refused to come again under such an obligation, and accordingly he was imprisoned on the Bass Rock.

There need be no wonder if a prisoner's heart failed him on being shut up in one of these dreadful dungeons on the Bass. Some of them were mere caverns, damp and cold from the water that oozed out of the slimy walls, without any fireplace and only a small slit in the wall to serve as a window, which admitted the light and the sea breeze together. They were not all, however, so bad as this. The one in

¹Wodrow's *History*, Vol. II. p. 270.

²Anderson's *Martyrs of the Bass*, p. 200.

which John Spreull was confined has been described as a dry vault, arched, floored, and walled with solid stone, having a stone seat, a tiny fireplace, and a little window, six inches wide, which opened to the east. The fireplace was without any grate, and the poker and tongs were secured to the jambs by iron chains. The door was of solid oak, six inches thick, studded with iron nails, the flat heads of which were as large as a crown piece, with an iron lock of great strength.¹ Spreull was confined in this vault for five years, until he was set at liberty in 1687; and it was most likely here, or perhaps in the Blackadder vault—a somewhat better one, that Mr Drummond was immured.

Three months afterwards he presented a petition to the Privy Council on the ground of his health, and he was set at liberty on caution being found for him that he would repair to Kilmarnock within fourteen days of his liberation, and confine himself to that parish until the following May, when he was required to remove to Kintyre and remain there until the Council's further orders, under a penalty of five thousand merks.²

He continued to preach, though he was not again apprehended; and in the beginning of the year 1688 it was reported to the Council that he had been preaching in a malt barn near Stow, and was then described as a fanatical preacher; but he kept in hiding until the persecutions came to an end. His health must have suffered much, however, during that trying

¹James Grant's *The White Cockade*, p. 210.

²*Acts of Privy Council*, quoted by Anderson

time, for after his settlement in Kilconquhar in 1691 he was often unable to preach, and frequently there was no lecture but only one sermon on the Sabbaths, "the minister not being in very good health." At the visitation of the presbytery in 1698, "he complained that his charge was weighty and heavy; and that he had neither ability nor mynd to discharge his duty as he wold. To which it was answered that it was not in the power of the presbytery to make his charge lighter, and that he behooved to look for his furnitur from the Lord, who is able to strengthen his weack servants in the acceptable discharge of their duty."¹ He had his trials, too, in the parish, for although most of the congregation was well affected towards him, some of the heritors never attended public worship, preferring to remain Episcopalians; and he had great difficulty in getting them to contribute their share of the poor's money, in some cases resource to legal proceedings being necessary. But all this might have been easily borne, if it had not been for the weak health which his previous sufferings had entailed.

Of those sentenced to death in the "killing time," there were three who belonged to Kilconquhar parish. They were—Andrew Pittilloch, a labourer in Earlsferry, where there were several families of that name, Adam Philip and Laurence Hay, who were weavers in Kilconquhar.² They seem to have been quiet, inoffensive men, and were not concerned in any of the risings or acts of rebellion, nor were they charged with attending field

¹*Kirk-session Minutes*, 8th June 1698.

²*Fountainhall's Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs*, i. 302.

conventicles. They had joined a society for prayer and conference, when they had not the gospel preached to them by any minister they could hear; and they had signed a paper called a "Testimony against the evils of the times," and they were indicted for publishing it. The dying testimonies of Pittilloch and Hay are given at length in the *Cloud of Witnesses*, in which they disowned the king and all the ministers of the kirk except Mr Donald Cargill, whom they regarded as the only faithful minister of the gospel. Wodrow says that the paper they signed was very wild, judging by the quotations from it in their process, and seemed to savour of Gib and his delusions. They were all three found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, and their heads having been severed from their bodies, to be affixed to the tolbooth in Cupar. The sentence was carried out in the case of Pittilloch and Hay on 13th July 1681, and a monument was erected to their memory in Cupar churchyard, where their heads were buried. The inscription runs thus:—"Here lyes Interred the Heads of Laure^{ce} Hay and Andrew Pitulloch who Suffered martyrdom at Edinr July 13th 1681 for adhering to the word of God & Scotland's covenanted work of Reformation, And also one of the Hands of David Hackston of Rathillot who was most cruelly murdered at Edinr July 30th 1680 for the same cause."

The property belonging to Pittilloch was escheated for the use of Kilconquhar kirk-session, and the latter paid £6 Scots to messengers for seizing his goods, and for arresting "the money which belonged to him in the hands of those who were resting these sums to him."

Adam Philip had the good fortune to escape this fate. He had been confined in Edinburgh tolbooth, but broke out of it along with other twenty-four prisoners. Some of them filed through the iron bars which guarded the window of their cell, and they also cut the beams of the floor above, so as to release their fellow prisoners in that room. Two of their friends in the street below overpowered the sentinel on guard, but he must have had sympathy for them, as he did not report the matter when he was relieved from his post; and this gave them time to hide themselves. Only one of them, a Mr John Dick, was re-captured. In December 1690, when all the troubles were past, Adam Philip was appointed church officer by the kirk-session of Kilconquhar, with David Ardles to assist him in the digging of graves; and in this office he spent the remainder of his days in peace and comfort.

It is curious to notice that in the Act of Indemnity passed soon after by Parliament, rescinding fines and forfeitures and sentences against the Covenanters, the names of these three men are included. This must have been welcome to Adam Philip, since he had actually been sentenced to death; but it seems a mockery in the case of those who had been executed, for their property which had been escheated would not be returned to their friends; but at the least it vindicated their characters.

Of those concerned in the assassination of Archbishop Sharp at Magus Muir there were three belonging to this parish. These were—George Fleming, the younger of the two of that name in Balboothie, and Andrew, and

Alexander Henderson, sons of John Henderson, farmer in Kilbrackmont. There is a tradition that the conspirators met the night before in the old mansion-house of Gilston, now the farmhouse of West Gilston Mains. They had several meetings as to what could be done to resist the encroachments on their liberty, and they had resolved "to take some course with William Carmichael to scarr him from his cruel courses."¹ This Carmichael was sheriff-depute of Fife, and had made himself extremely obnoxious by the fines and cruelties he had inflicted on the outed ministers and those who adhered to them. He had obtained warning of their intentions, however, and rode back to Cupar; and the conspirators were about to disperse when word was brought to them that the bishop's coach was passing between Ceres and Blebohole. This seemed to them providential, for while they had missed the instrument, here was the arch-enemy himself in their hands.

The story of the murder need not be told here, as it is found in all the histories of the time. They disarmed the servants and put the bishop to death, in spite of his entreaties and those of his daughter to spare his life. The deed cannot in any way be justified, though allowance must be made for the terrible sufferings he inflicted on so many others.

There is a tradition that the conspirators after the deed returned by Blackfaulds, and skirted the farm of Bruntshole, having washed their swords in the Maul loch, a pool of water then among the moors.²

¹Russell's *Account* affixed to Kirkton's History, p. 406.

²Told me by Mr William Robertson, Pittenweem, one of whose ancestors, Thomas Ness, took an active part in the tragedy.

George Fleming and the two Hendersons returned to their homes, and went about their usual employments for five or six days, when the pursuit became so hot that they had to take refuge in flight. They had several narrow escapes, as when Andrew Henderson lay hidden in a hole when the dragoons were searching for them. A soldier was within a few feet of him, and had almost touched him, when the officer cried out, "Are you seeking for hens?" and the man went away. They hid in a cave at the seaside for a time, then escaped to the west country, going by way of Dunblane and Kilsyth. They joined the insurgent army on the evening of the battle of Drumclog, and were present at the engagement of Bothwell Bridge, George Fleming being a quartermaster and the two Hendersons corporals.¹ They returned to Fife, hiding at Kilbrackmont and Stenton and other places until they escaped to Holland in the following November 1679, where they remained in safety till the Revolution. George Fleming was afterwards an elder in Kilconquhar church, and we can imagine the many talks he would have with the minister and beadle—both Covenanters like himself—on the persecutions they had suffered.

It is worth noticing that none of the men actually engaged in the assassination were ever discovered. Hackston of Rathillet was the commander of the party, but he did not approve of what was done and only looked on, refusing to take any active part in it; while Andrew Gillon, a poor weaver in Balmerino, only held

¹Russell's *Account*, p. 451.

their horses, yet both of them were executed with barbarous cruelty. Those who were hung at Magus Muir, where a monument has been erected to their memory, were prisoners taken at Bothwell, and were executed as a public warning in default of the actual persons.

Of the prisoners taken at Bothwell, who were drowned off the coast of Orkney on their way to banishment in the plantations of America, two of them, Andrew Prie and James Kirk, are said in the *Cloud of Witnesses* to have belonged to "the parish of Largo and Kilconquhar."

Heavy fines were inflicted upon many of the inhabitants of the parish. One of the heaviest of these sufferers¹ was John Henderson, the farmer of Kilbrackmont. He was imprisoned for a long time for harbouring his sons after the archbishop's murder, and was liberated on a bond of a thousand merks to compear when called.¹ Besides this, he was fined £600 by the sheriff-depute, and had twenty-five dragoons quartered on him for ten days, until he paid the fine, and "gave bond to putt away his wyf and two daughters."² His wife, Eupham Finlay, was afterwards fined £600 for house conventicles, that is for being present in a private house when one of the outed ministers preached and conducted a religious service.

In the year 1683 a decret was issued by the Sheriff Court at Cupar against the following persons in the parish:—James Thomsone in Easter Lathallan; John Staig in Incharvie; Thomas Waddell in the Hillhouse;

¹Wodrow's *History*, vol. III. p. 176.

²Wodrow M.S.S. in the Advocates' Library.

and David Johnstone in Kilconquhar, all tenants. These were each fined £600 Scots. The following cottars or farm servants were each fined £300 Scots:—James Rodger in Incharvie; Michael Kinloch in Kilconquhar; and Thomas Herd, Adam Watson, Arnald Young, Elspeth Russell, all in Barnyards.¹

By a later decret of the same court fines of £600 were inflicted on George Fleming, Balbuthie, and his wife and family; John Berd, and James Thomson, tenants in Lathones, who were also denounced as fugitives. And fines of £300 were inflicted on Anna Mitchell, daughter of David Mitchell, tenant farmer in Balbuthie, whose widow, Eupham Carstairs, farmed it till 1701; on the wife of John Staig, tenant in Kilconquhar Ground; Thomas Philip, weaver in Barnyards; Thomas Philp, weaver in Falfield; and David Brown, slater in Lathallan.* Wodrow gives £8500 as the amount of the fines for the whole parish, as taken from the Sheriff books at Cupar.

The charge against them was for withdrawing from the church, attending house and field conventicles, harbouring the persecuted ministers in their houses, and getting them to perform the marriage ceremony and to baptize their children. And it is no wonder that so many fines were inflicted and rigidly exacted, when the money did not go to the government but to the Sheriffs and their deputes, who thus found it to their own interest to harass the presbyterians as much as possible.

In May 1684 a royal proclamation was issued denoun-

¹Wodrow M.S.S. in the Advocates' Library.

^aIbid

cing as fugitives and rebels an immense number of people throughout all the counties of Scotland. The following belonged to this parish :—Alexander Young in Muircambus and Thomas Abercromby, his servitor; John Duncan in Muircambus Mill, and Margaret Norrie, his mother; — Pride, in Muircambus in Samford; William Robertson in Kinneuchar; John Hederwick, tenant to Rires; James Finlay in Balchristie; and John Scott in Fafield, or Lathons.¹

There were not so many field preachings in Fife as there were in the west and south of Scotland, though Mr Welsh and others' preached to large audiences in the fields and in vacant churches. There was one, however, in 1674 at Balcarres Craig, a place well adapted for the purpose. "It was then bare of trees, and capable of accommodating thousands upon thousands of hearers ranged in concentric circles round the minister preaching like John the Baptist from the summit of the rock to his weeping audience."² Earl Colin, himself a staunch Episcopalian, was away from home at this time, but his two sisters, Lady Sophia and Lady Henrietta Lindsay, sympathised most warmly with the oppressed fugitives, and they no doubt were among the people of distinction said to have been present on this occasion. There was an immense audience, and the preacher was the well known Rev. John Blackadder, who had been ejected from his parish in Troqueer in 1662, who was one of the first to unfurl the banner of the Covenant on the mountains and

¹Wodrow's *History*, vol. IV. p. 13.

²Lord Lindsay's *Memoirs of Lady Anna Mackenzie*, p. 113.

moors, and who was also one of the martyrs of the Bass Rock.

His text was Job xxiii. 3. "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" It is related that as the preacher was setting forth the miseries of those who had lost God for ever and who despaired of finding mercy, a countryman was brought under deep conviction of sin, and so eager was he to hear that he pressed forward to the door of the tent, listening to every word "as if sucking it out of the preacher's mouth." He followed Mr Blackadder to the house where he had gone for refreshment, and confessed to him that he had been a notorious sinner and an enemy to all that is good, confessing also one sin that was capital. He became a changed man, and Mr Blackadder used afterwards to say that such instances of the power and irresistible grace of God rejoiced his heart, and did him more good than twenty years' stipend.¹

Thus the people of Kilconquhar had their share of the sufferings of the church of Scotland in the seventeenth century; and whatever view may be taken of the armed resistance and acts of rebellion on the part of the Covenanters, we can feel pity for their terrible sufferings, and we ought to rejoice in the religious freedom they won for us at such a cost to themselves.

¹Crichton's *Memoirs of Rev. John Blackader*, p. 166.

CHAPTER IX.

The United Presbyterian Church.

THE United Presbyterian congregation of Colinsburgh was founded on the 4th August 1760, and was long known as the Relief Church. The immediate cause of it was a presentation to Kilconquhar church given by the Earl of Balcarres to Dr John Chalmers of Elie, to whom objection was taken by a large majority of the congregation. The opposition was not so much to Dr Chalmers personally, as to resentment against the system of patronage, and a desire to have some share in the choice of their minister. This feeling was shown in regard to Mr Clidesdale twenty years before, and it came to a head now. The dissentients were supported in their opposition by both the presbytery and the synod, but the assembly of 1760 sustained the appeal of the patron and enjoined the presbytery to proceed at once with his induction. The settlement took place on the 19th June, and all the elders except one, and the great majority of the people at once left and

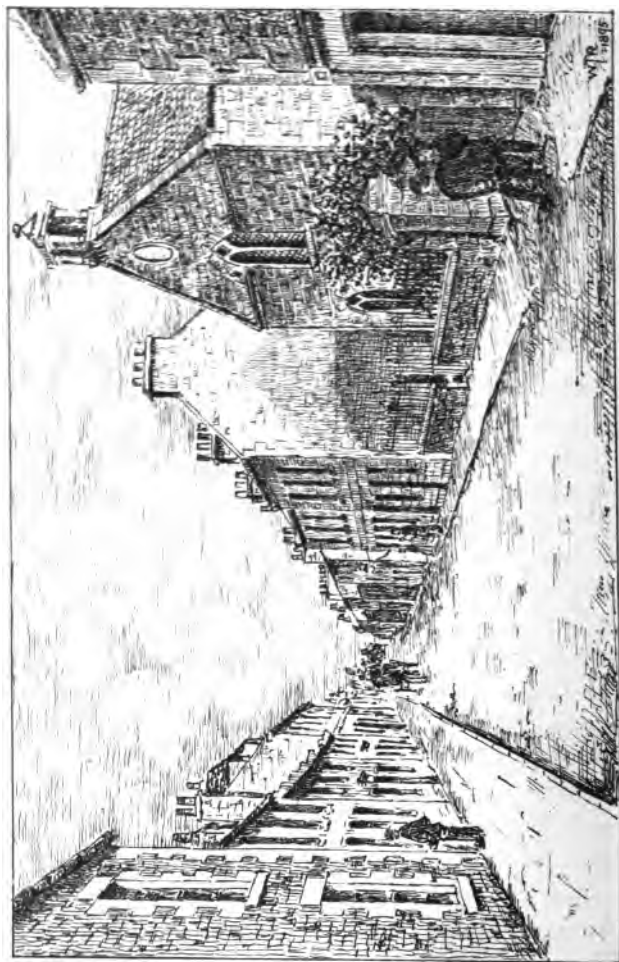
proceeded to organise a separate congregation in Colinsburgh.¹

The congregational minute book begins with the words, written in large letters, "The United congregation in Colinsburgh dissented from the practice of the Church of Scotland, but steadily adheres to her good rules, desiring to hold communion with all her faithful and honest friends ; Maintaining the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free."

The reasons for their action are then given at length, and can best be told in their own words. "This congregation after having done all that was in their power according to the rules of the church, their presbytery and synod countenancing and agreeing with them, but an appeal was brought before the commission, although the Assembly did not refer our affair to them, neither could they do it as it was never before the Assembly, but the commission took to themselves power, and ordered the presbytery of St Andrews to transport Dr Chalmers from Elie, to be minister at Kilconquhar, a large mile distant, and reversed the sentence of the synod.

"This congregation did early, warmly and freely, as with one heart and one voice, declare against this Mr Chalmers being their minister in a sincere and discreet manner, in great concern, that the presbytery was much moved except Messrs Hill, Pitcairn, Bet,

¹A much fuller account will be found in the present writer's *History of Colinsburgh United Presbyterian Church*, published in 1883; but as that impression was limited to a hundred copies, which were all sold out within six weeks, the following sketch will not be out of place. Much additional information, however, will be found here, as the original minute book of the congregation had been lost, and was not discovered till a large part of the History had been printed.



COLINSBURGH.

Mair, Chislie. We being overpowered and he transported, our christian privileges being refused by all our neighbouring ministers but Mr James Smith in Newburn, who would take no charge of us, we had great difficulty in hearing; our numerous congregation crowded their neighbouring kirks where they had freedom to hear, that many could not win within doors in the winter time.

“Therefore we, the heads of Families, taking this our state under consideration, afraid religion should much decay among us, having no minister to visit and catechise, and both the young and old to be without Gospel preaching, and if we continue in this state religion must suffer and the power of it decay, and the Lord’s ordinances be neglected.

“We having a great regard to the church of Scotland, whose doctrine, discipline and government were founded on the word of God at the Reformation, and no other laws put in their place, although many do not make them their rule but act quite contrary thereto; and in the maintaining of our liberty and freedom of conscience, to do all we can for the church of Christ, we heartily petitioned the elders of our bounds, that in our name and for our relief, to apply to the Rev. Mr Thomas Boston and the Rev. Mr Thomas Gillespie, ministers, sufferers as we, that they would consider our distressed state that we are in, and assist us in seeking for a faithful minister to be our minister. They under the direction of Providence engaged to do all that was in their power to get us comfortably supplied, and were of opinion they could before we were ready.

“Our present distress moved us to have compassion upon our fellow Christians in our neighbouring congregations, and invited them to meet with us at all times, to give us their best advice and assistance in every respect, so that we became one body or congregation.

“We finding it necessary in every respect for us to have a meeting-house as a place of worship, after surveying several places, we at last fixed upon a parcel of houses in the middle of the town of Colinsburgh, (the most central place in our congregation,) and made a purchase of the same; viz. from David Litster, one house for nineteen pounds sterling; from David Ure, one house for seven pounds seven shillings sterling; and from Alexander Scott, his houses and yard, and all things therein adjacent to the other houses, for twenty pounds sterling; desiring the said Alexander Scott to take rights for the whole in his own name upon our expense, in order that he may have power to dispose the same to us, and our deputies and successors, as they shall be chosen by our congregation, according to the model that we shall erect for ourselves.”¹ And so resolute were they that the work was begun on the 15th August 1760, less than two months after the induction of Dr Chalmers, Messrs Alexander Gourlay and Thomas Jervice taking charge of the mason and wright work respectively.

The next thing was to raise the money, and they set about this in a businesslike way. The managers were appointed to collect from the members and their sympathisers in the different districts whatever sums each

¹Congregational Minute Book, p. 3.

thought proper to give, and when this money was expended and found to be insufficient a second subscription was taken. Various sums, none of them of great amount, were lent by friends, and these were very soon paid off; so that the church was built and practically paid for before they called a minister—a laudable example which modern congregations might very well follow.

At the first collection there were fifty-two subscribers in Colinsburgh, the sums varying from twenty-five shillings to sixpence; and as money was much scarcer then than it is now, these sums represent much more than the same sums would do at the present day. There were also subscribers from Kilconquhar, Barnyards, Earlsferry, Grange, Hillhouse, St Ford, Lathallan, Kilbrackmont, Largoward, Rottenra, Rires, St Monance, North and South Falfield, Largo, Newburn, St Andrews, and no fewer than eighty from Carnbee parish. The names of many of the earliest feuars in Colinsburgh are to be found in these lists, such as the Gourlays, Mathers, Smith, Boutchard, Small, Traill, Gardiner, Hutcheon, Ireland, Dewar, Fair, Couper, Mathison, Carstairs, some of which names still linger in the district. The entire cost was upwards of £240 for the church and about £50 for the manse, large sums in those days, which shows that the people were not only ready to stand by their principles but to pay for them.

In the meantime efforts were being made to obtain a minister. From the beginning the members were distressed in their minds because all the neighbouring ministers refused to baptize their children, unless they could

produce a certificate from Dr Chalmers, which they said they had not liberty of conscience to ask, and which they were not likely to have got if they had asked. Mr Smith of Newburn warmly sympathised with them, but "at this time he had got a misfortunate fall which made him much indisposed;" and he had not then severed his connection with the Established Church, as he did afterwards when, in conjunction with Mr Ferrier of Largo parish, he formed the congregation known as the "Balchristie folks." They applied to Mr Gillespie of Dunfermline, who deeply sympathised with them, but to avoid the sin of schism he would not come to preach to them and baptise their children until all the ministers in the presbytery had refused, for only then did he think he had the Lord's call to assist them.

Mr Gillespie came to Colinsburgh at the earnest entreaty of the elders on the 7th September, 1760, and baptized seven or eight children. The building of the church being only newly begun, a "tent" or temporary pulpit was erected in the open air, and Mr Gillespie preached to them from Acts iv. 12, the first sermon preached to them as a congregation. There was a large attendance, and the collection amounted to six pounds; and a few days afterwards it was widely rumoured that Dr Chalmers intended to claim this money, as the elders who had taken charge of the collection had not severed their connection with the parish church. Accordingly the next time Mr Gillespie preached to them the collection, which amounted to £10 2s 5d, was taken by the principal managers in accordance with legal advice; and public intimation was made that the money to be col-

lected was for the building of the meeting house and other uses of the congregation. This led to the practice of the managers, instead of the elders, taking charge of the collections at the church door, which has been continued ever since.

Through Mr Gillespie the congregation heard of some ministers of good report and abilities, who might be expected to look favourably on a call from them. The first of these was Rev. Thomas Scott, a dissenting minister in Hexham, Northumberland. As they could not prevail upon him to come and preach to them, they appointed four commissioners to go to Hexham to hear him in his own meeting-house ; and the needful money was at once gathered to defray their expenses. The members met in four different places in one day, and about the same hour, each of the divisions choosing its own representative ; and they were "earnestly entreated not only to hear for themselves but for the whole community, and honestly to report what they heard."¹ On their return the congregation was called together, and the commissioners made their report by giving an account of Mr Scott's prayers, then of his lecture, and lastly of his sermon, with which the people were well satisfied. A call was duly drawn out and forwarded to Mr Scott in February, 1761 ; but he declined it "on account of his inabilities for such a great charge and his broken state of health." He afterwards became the first minister of the Relief church in Auchtermuchty, where he laboured for a good many years.

In the following June, Alexander Scott and William

¹Congregational Minute Book, p. 18.

Ramsay were sent as commissioners to Dunfermline and Jedburgh to see Messrs Gillespie and Boston, and to seek advice from them as to a suitable minister ; and by them the attention of the people was directed to the Rev. Thomas Colier, then minister at Ravenstonedale in Westmoreland. He was prevailed upon to preach in Dunfermline on 6th September, 1761, where a great many of the Colinsburgh people went to hear him ; and being satisfied with his discourses, they waited upon him next day to converse with him on the principles of religion and the government of the Church. At their request he preached in Colinsburgh for two Sabbaths, and then a call was drawn up and harmoniously subscribed by the elders and " many hundreds of people " in a public manner before witnesses. Mr Colier was present with them, and having enquired as to their motives in giving him the call, he at once accepted of it to their great joy.

The stipend fixed upon was sixty pounds a year with a manse, a very handsome sum in those days, quite equal to that enjoyed by the majority of parish ministers, and much larger than that of many dissenting ministers. Mr Gillespie's stipend at Dunfermline, for example, was fifty pounds, and five pounds for a house ; the first minister of the Secession church at Midcalder had only forty pounds for many years after this, while the wellknown Dr Doddridge had only thirty-five pounds.¹ The minute may be given, shewing as it does their willingness and their Scotch caution as well,—“ The elders and principal managers met and declared themselves to be

¹Duncan's *The Scottish Sanctuary*, p. 151.

well satisfied with Mr Colier's behaviour to them, when he received the congregation's call to be their minister. Remembering that formerly it was agreed upon that a minister's living or maintenance from us as a grant of love should not exceed sixty pounds sterling money, unless some extraordinary circumstances cast up to us that we did not yet foresee. And at present we do unanimously agree that Mr Colier's maintenance as a grant of love from us shall be sixty pounds sterling money yearly; payable four times in the year, at each time fifteen pounds sterling, and this only to take place three months after his admission to be our minister; and so to continue so long as he is our minister and we supported by the congregation to give him the foresaid fifteen pounds quarterly, which support we only can expect will arise from their seat rents and collections at the house door. And if these two funds shall not make up the foresaid sum of sixty pounds, then in that case Master Colier's maintenance or grant of love must be reduced to what we are able to give at such times; yet always reserving part of these funds for paying of debt, interest of debt, and holding up the meeting house and all things belonging thereunto, which if neglected to be done would be one great means of decreasing the foresaid funds."¹ They thus took care to provide for every contingency, but their engagements were always fully met.

The house purchased in 1761 for Mr Colier, still the property of the congregation, though not now the manse, stands near the west end of the town on the

¹Congregational Minute Book, p. 28.

north side of the street. It was purchased from Thomas Jervice, along with some furniture he could spare; and as he does not seem to have been infest in the property it was conveyed by William Traill, the previous possessor, and the titles were made out in the name of the managers and their successors in office. They were "William Cornfoot, tenant in Abercrombie, David Aitken, tenant in Comilaw, David Carstairs, feuar in Barnyards of Kilconquhar, James Smith, baker in Colinsburgh, and David Robertson, feuar in Largoward, managers of the society erected for religious purposes at Colinsburgh, for behoof of the said society and whole members, partners and brethren thereof, and their successors in office."

The house with the necessary repairs cost nearly fifty pounds; and the inventory of the fixtures which went along with it is curious, and gives some idea of dwelling houses at that time, shewing that sitting rooms were usually bedrooms as well. "In the kitchen, one fixed bed, closet, press, and kitchen shelf. In the east room above the kitchen a fixed bed and press. In the west room above, a bed and a closet, fixed press, six chairs, and a table and cupboard. In the west room below, a folding fixed bed in the corner, and a cupboard and table in the north side of the room."

Mr Colier's admission took place on Thursday, the 22nd October, 1761, Messrs Gillespie and Boston conducting the service; and in the afternoon these three ministers, with an elder from each of their congregations, met for the first time in a presbyterial capacity.

Thus the church in Colinsburgh enjoys the honour of being a cradle of the United Presbyterian Church, the Relief Church having been founded and its first presbytery formed here, just as the first Secession presbytery was formed by Ebenezer Erskine and his three brethren at Gairney Bridge thirty years before.

A full minute was taken of both meetings, and recorded in the congregational minute book; and as it gives a clear and interesting account of the whole proceedings of that day, it is here given entire:—

“1761, October 22nd day, being formerly fixed for Mr Colier's admission to be minister to this congregation—a day immediately after a solemn fast. The elders met in the morning, found it necessary that one of their number should be chosen by them to be a member of the intended presbytery; so for that purpose they called Mr Colier, and after constituting a session, made choice of Alexander Scott to be a member of the intended presbytery; the members present, besides the minister, are as follows, viz.—William Ramsay, Thomas Russell, Andrew Wilson, George Taylor, and Alexander Scott, elders.

“This 22nd October 1761, the Rev. Mr Thomas Boston, minister of the gospel at Jedburgh, preached the admission sermon from 1. Cor. ii. and 2, “For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified:” and afterwards proceeded to all the other parts of the solemnity according to Scripture, and then the elders, principal managers, and whole body of the people received him as their minister.

“In the evening of this day the persecuted ministers

met with Mr Colier, and an elder from each of their congregations met in the meeting-house here, and formed themselves into a presbytery, called the Presbytery of Relief, for the reasons following:—

“Whereas Thomas Gillespie, minister of the gospel at Carnock, was deposed by the General Assembly, 1752, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole king and head of the church, and by virtue of the power and authority committed by him to them, from the office of the holy ministry, and prohibited and discharged to exercise the same, or any part thereof, within this church, the Established Church of Scotland, in all time coming. And they thereby did and do declare the church and parish of Carnock vacant, from and after the date of that sentence, merely because he would not settle Mr Andrew Richardson, then minister at Broughton, as minister of the gospel at Inverkeithing, contrary to the will of the congregation,—thus in contradiction to Scripture, in opposition to the constitution and standing laws of the Church of Scotland ; what had, therefore, been a manifest violation of the solemn oath and engagements he came under when admitted minister of Carnock, therefore a presumptuous sin ; thus a highly aggravated transgression of the law of the great God and our Saviour.

“Mr Thomas Boston, then minister of the gospel at Oxnam, received a scriptural call from the parish and congregation of Jedburgh to minister among them in holy things, the which call he regularly accepted according to Christ’s appointment. And as the presbytery of Jedburgh refused to loose his relation ’twixt him and the

parish and congregation of Oxnam, and establish a relation 'twixt him and the parish and congregation of Jedburgh though required; he thought they refused to do their duty, he was bound to do his by the divine authority; therefore peaceably and orderly gave in to that presbytery a demission of his charge of Oxnam, and took charge of the congregation of Jedburgh.

“Mr Thomas Colier, late minister of the gospel at Ravenstone-Dale in England, has accepted a call from the oppressed congregation of Kilconquhar, and others joined with them, to fulfil among them that ministry he has received from the Lord.

“These three ministers think themselves indispensably bound by the authority of the Lord Redeemer, King and Head of his Church, to fulfil every part of the ministry they have received from him; and for that end, in concurrence with ruling elders, to constitute a presbytery as scripture directs; for committing that ministry Christ has entrusted them with to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others, and to act for the relief of oppressed Christian congregations, when called in providence; and therein they act precisely the same part they did when ministers, members of the Established Church of Scotland.

“In consequence whereof, Mr Thomas Colier, late minister in Ravenstone-Dale, having got an unanimous call from the congregation of Colinsburgh to be their minister, was this day admitted to the office, after sermon preached from 1 Cor. ii. and 2, by Mr Thomas Boston, minister at Jedburgh, and the same day, at four of the clock in the afternoon, Messrs Boston, Gillespie

and Colier, with an elder from the respective congregations, viz. from the congregation of Jedburgh, George Rutherford; from the congregation of D^{un}fermline, Provost David Turnbull; from the congregation of Colinsburgh, Alexander Scott, convened in the meeting-house of Colinsburgh, and by solemn prayer by Mr Thomas Gillespie, formed themselves into a presbytery for the relief of Christians oppressed in their Christian privileges.

“The presbytery thus constituted choose Mr Thomas Boston for their moderator, and the above Alexander Scott for their clerk, *pro tempore*. The presbytery adjourned to the house of Alexander Scott.

“The presbytery appoints Thursday the 17th day of December next to be observed in the congregations under their inspection, as a day of solemn thanksgiving unto God for his goodness in the late harvest; and agreed their next meeting should be when Providence calls. The sederunt closed with prayer.”¹

The church had been used for public worship for six weeks before Mr Colier's induction, and the managers now proceeded to let the seats, giving the first choice to those who had subscribed for the purchase of the ground and the erection of the buildings. The prices were on a graduated scale, and were as follows, “For each person, without the lofts in the middle of the house, to be two and twenty pence yearly, and all behind falling each seat twopence till the uttermost. The seats in the foremost part in the lofts at two shillings and sixpence, the second twenty pence, and each seat behind falling twopence, till

¹Congregational Minute Book, pp. 41-3.

they come to a shilling sterling." These sums were to be paid in quarterly instalments, for the minister's stipend was then paid quarterly, as it has been done ever since.

The congregation was divided into four quarters or districts, and at the election of managers the members of each district appointed five from among themselves to form the management, or twenty in all; and the managers of each district thus elected chose one to represent them, who were called the principal managers; and these latter collected the seat rents in their respective districts, handing in the money at the quarterly meetings of the whole managers.

For many years the communion was observed twice a year, in March and in August, and there was always the preliminary fast day on the previous Thursday, with the usual services on the Saturday and Monday. A "tent," or temporary wooden pulpit, was used for many years at the sacraments, and the accounts contain regular payments for the putting up and taking of it down, and occasional items for nails and planks repairing it. The ordinance itself was observed within the church, and it was customary for one of the assisting ministers to preach to the people outside, while the solemnity was going on within. The "action sermon" was always preached by the minister of the congregation in the church in the morning, while the evening or more popular discourses were preached from the tent, the audience sitting on the green sward, and with the sky for a canopy.

The work on these occasions must have been very heavy, for there were usually eight sermons preached,

besides table addresses, and Mr Colier never had any assistance during his seven year's ministry. This was hardly to be expected at first, since the ministers of the new body were so few; but the Relief Church rapidly increased, for within twelve years after the formation of the first presbytery there were twenty congregations; and after that time Mr Cowan had usually one and sometimes two ministers assisting him.

This first church was a large plain building, not unlike a barn, as most meeting houses then were, with three doors to the street, and holding an audience of ten or twelve hundred. It was often filled in a literal sense from floor to roof, for the ceiling was low, and the seats in the back gallery being high, some of the young men used to mount up to the open rafters, and sit on them to make room for others.

The exact number of members at that time cannot now be ascertained, but many hundreds were present to sign Mr Colier's call. Two thousand tokens were provided for the first communion, and it is said there were often fifteen hundred communicants, besides many spectators. They came as far as from Dysart on the one side, and Crail on the other; and some idea of the numbers may be inferred from the fact that the bread and wine usually cost above three pounds. The roads leading to Colinsburgh on the morning of a communion Sabbath were as crowded as on the fair days. The men came respectably dressed in their best, the women carried their bibles wrapped in their snow-white pocket handkerchiefs, with a bit of southernwood or posy of flowers. The farmers rode on their work horses, with

their wives behind them on a pad, and there was a "louping-on stane" opposite the church for their convenience.

For the two first occasions on which the communion was observed the cups were borrowed from Dunfermline, and the church-officer¹ was paid for going there for them and again returning them, but in August 1763 a set was purchased for themselves. The new cups and patens obtained in Mr Jamieson's time in 1801, as well as the tokens bearing his initials, were used by the congregation for eighty years; and in 1882 Mr James Kidd, along with one or two other members, presented the congregation with a very handsome electro-plated communion service, and also a new set of tokens.

The first session clerk of the congregation was Mr Alexander Scott, brewer in Colinsburgh, and one of the most active supporters of the movement, who gave his services gratuitously, though a salary was pressed upon him by the managers; and the first precentor was Mr Alexander Mathison. The two offices were conjoined in 1767, and Mr Graham, who had then come to the town as a teacher, was appointed precentor and session clerk; but he left within two years, and his successor, Mr Simpson, held both offices for some years. David Taylor was appointed precentor and clerk in 1779, and David Gordon in 1793. Some time after this Mr Alexander Morris was appointed precentor—the congregation then worshipping in the East church—who discharged the duties for many years; and he was succeeded by his son,

¹The church-officers were—John Wilson, appointed in 1760, William Wilson in 1783, William Leslie in 1787, and David Hill in 1795.

Mr James Morris, still happily amongst us, who only retired from the office in 1881, when he was presented by the congregation with a marble timepiece and a purse of sovereigns, in recognition of his valued services during the long period of thirty-seven years.

The kirk-session had duties laid upon them similar to those performed by the session at Kilconquhar. Ample provision was made for the poor of the congregation, as the collections were liberal, and the seat rents were nearly sufficient to pay the minister's stipend. Considerable sums were distributed at each observance of the Lord's Supper, weekly allowances were given to some of the poor, and occasional sums were paid to others by the treasurer when required. And they not only supported ordinances among themselves, but were ready to help others in their need. Special collections were made at various times, such as to help the congregation at Blairlogie to build a manse, to the Largo congregation when they were building their first church, and for Mr Robert Cowan's church at Newcastle. They sent a collection of five pounds to Mr Whilock's academy in North America, to aid "in educating the young natives in America to be schoolmasters, and to preach the gospel to their respective tribes in their own language." There were also special payments for such purposes as a bridge at Largo; for a tree to cross the Balcarres Mill burn; and for the benefit of the people whose effects were destroyed at the burning of Kilbrachmont House in 1783.

As in other congregations, the session had to deal with cases of discipline. Two of these were cases of irregular marriage, that is, where the parties had declared them-

selves to be husband and wife in a formal manner in the presence of witnesses, without having had the ceremony performed by a minister. These marriages were quite legal by the law of Scotland, but were always frowned on by kirk-sessions. Most of the cases were offences committed before marriage, or where marriage did not take place. In many of these instances the parties were restored to membership after a private rebuke before the session, while others were required "to appear before the congregation the next Lord's day, to receive a public rebuke and give evidence of their repentance." Occasional instances of discipline must have continued to come before them, but after 1770 they were no longer recorded in the minutes. There was no penitents' stool, as that had practically been done away with before this time, but the delinquents had to take their places in one of the pews in front of the pulpit, and to stand during the rebuke; and indeed, it is only within the last thirty or forty years that public censures were everywhere discontinued.

The managers were also bankers in a small way, for they were in the habit of lending various sums of money to members who might be in temporary need, as the Kilconquhar kirk-session had always done. Bills were granted in the usual form, and interest was paid on the loans. One of these, having two threepenny government stamps impressed upon it, was thus expressed, "Colinsburgh, 12 June, 1787. Honest men conjunctly and severally. One day after date pay to us elders and managers of the congregation of Colinsburgh, or our successors in that office, or order at Mr John Fair's

house, writer in said place, the sum of one pound sterling received in cash." Then follow the designations and signatures of the borrower and of the friend who had become security for him. It remains unpaid to this day. Another bill was for five pounds, bearing the same date in 1787. Three pounds of the capital sum were repaid ten years afterwards, thirty shillings having been paid in interest, and the balance is still standing.

The congregation also gave some attention to education. In 1767 the managers rented a house, and paid for the tables and forms for a school, Mr Graham being the teacher, and after him came Mr Simpson; and the rent was regularly paid till 1778, when the congregation became divided, and the school was carried on entirely by the teachers themselves.

Soon after the ordination of Mr Cowan in 1771, a controversy arose as to the terms of communion, which he was among the first to awaken, and which caused so much trouble in the congregation as to lead to its being afterwards divided into two.

One of the points to which the Relief fathers strenuously adhered was the doctrine of communion among all visible saints. Many of them had come from England, and held broader and more enlightened views as to the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and the true brotherhood of all his people than did the early Seceders. This may have been partly due to the visits of Whitfield, as both Gillespie and Bayne had co-operated with him in his revival work in Scotland. They never made any secret of their willingness to hold occasional communion with

any of the true followers of the Lord Jesus; and this was represented as indiscriminate communion, as undue laxity of principle, and as giving up that which our forefathers had won for us with their liberty and their blood. They asserted the lawfulness of holding communion with *saints* of other denominations, and this was spoken of as if it included the worldly and irreligious.

By this time the Relief presbytery had been divided into two, the one section meeting in Edinburgh and the other in Glasgow. In May 1772, a joint meeting of the two presbyteries was held for consultation, and at this meeting Mr Cowan asked that the terms of communion should be defined. "A motion was made by Mr Cowan, desiring to know the mind of the meeting with respect to holding ministerial and Christian communion with those of the Episcopal and Independent persuasion; and with respect to those who are unsound in the essentials of the Christian faith, particularly by their publications to the world.

"With respect to the last of these, the meeting unanimously agreed that their principles did not allow them to hold communion with such.

"With respect to the other, viz., ministerial or Christian communion occasionally with those of the Episcopal or Independent persuasion, the meeting being of different opinions, put a vote,—Hold communion with those of the Episcopal or Independent persuasion occasionally, upon supposition always, that they are by profession visible saints, or not? And the roll being called and votes marked, it carried, Hold communion. And there-

fore the meeting find it agreeable to the principles of Relief to hold communion occasionally with such."¹

In the following year the two presbyteries formed themselves into a synod, when the matter was again brought up, and the former decision was again come to, not now by a majority but by the unanimous voice of the whole court.

Mr Cowan took a strong stand against what he called "the monstrous classing of Presbytery, Episcopacy and Independency," and wished communion "restricted to Presbyterians who were visible saints,"² and this brought disunion into his congregation. Some adhered to his views, while others were strongly opposed to them. A majority of the managers presented a petition to the synod in May 1773, craving that a presbyterial visitation be appointed in order to remove some hardships and grievances; and accordingly the presbytery of Glasgow was appointed to meet in Colinsburgh on the 16th June. It seems that Mr Cowan had excluded from the session an elder who would not adopt his sectarian principles of communion. Thirteen of the elders, four of the managers, and a majority of the members were on the side of their minister; and they were guided by Mr Alexander Scott, who took every possible step to strengthen Mr Cowan's position.

The annual election of managers had been neglected for some years, and to this they attributed much of the trouble that had come upon them. The managers "who were steadfast in their principles" and the ses-

¹*A Just View of the Principles of the Presbytery of Relief*, p. 14.

²*Congregational Minute Book*, p. 146.

sion called a meeting of the congregation, and a supplement to the bond of copartnership, drawn up by Mr Scott on stamped paper, was formally subscribed before witnesses by the members who had not signed the former one. By these means they were made joint partners in the society, along with the original contributors, who were thus far outnumbered, and the minister and his supporters became the governing party in the church. A new election of managers was made at the same meeting, and those who were friendly to the synod were not re-elected, and others were put into their places.

The session, however, refused to meet with the deputation from the presbytery, and they even went so far as to lock the doors and seal the windows of the church, to prevent any meeting being held. When the deputation arrived in Colinsburgh they were met by the managers, who read to them a formal protest disclaiming their jurisdiction and refusing all conference.

It is a great pity that the congregation did not enter into a friendly discussion of the differences between them and the synod, as it would probably have been found that these were caused by misunderstandings which might easily have been removed. But the people were too excited to reason calmly on the subject, and they allowed themselves to be carried away by prejudices. Their action proved most disastrous for themselves, as it increased the disaffection among their own members. The session spoke lightly of the numbers who left them, but they found whole seats deserted by their former possessors; and in declaring these vacant only two months afterwards, they wrote very strongly

of those who had left them, saying that "like Reuben they had shown themselves unstable as water, having broken the sacred bands of heaven, casting these conscience binding cords away from them."

When this was reported to the synod in the following year, it was resolved to make another attempt to hold a conference with Mr Cowan; and he was asked to meet with them at Largo, but this he would not do. He was next summoned to attend a meeting of the synod in May 1775, but this he also declined. As he thus refused to have any intercourse with them, and would not submit himself to any authority, the synod with great reluctance, and by a great majority, declared him to be no longer one of their number. As the majority of the members adhered to him they were necessarily excluded with him, and they remained in this isolated position for many years.

About the year 1790 Mr Cowan tried to get his people to join the Church of Scotland as a chapel of ease, but they gave no countenance to the proposal, preferring to be connected with the Relief Church. Accordingly overtures were made to the synod, and they gave such explanations as to the deliverances on the terms of communion as removed anything that might be regarded as personally offensive to Mr Cowan and his people. A petition was transmitted in 1791, signed by Mr Cowan, but the synod unanimously rejected it from dissatisfaction with its spirit. Another attempt was made two years later, but this was equally unsuccessful. During these two years Mr Alexander Scott and many others had withdrawn from public ordinances, on the ground

that Mr Cowan's reputation was not blameless; and this seems to have been the reason of the second failure, for the synod records say, that it was "agreed without a vote to dismiss the petition as it now stands, finding it would not answer the great purpose of edification, were the congregation of Colinsburgh to be readmitted with Mr Cowan as their minister."

"The consequence of this decision was that the congregation divided into two parties—one for Mr Cowan, and another for the synod. As they were not likely to coalesce, the synod received their adherents as a new congregation, and these constituted thereafter the Relief Church of Colinsburgh. Opposition made the other party cleave the more closely to Mr Cowan, and they were the more numerous of the two. The synodical section, however, contained more of the original subscribers than the other, and they raised an action at law to get possession of the church. The process was continued for years before the Sheriff of Fife and the Court of Session, and each party got interlocutors at different times in its favour."¹

In 1797 the Court of Session decided in favour of the managers and members who adhered to the Relief synod, as they had a majority of the original subscribers, the interest being regulated by value and not numbers; but by this time they had built another church for themselves, and had no use for the original building. This was long known as the East Church, and was on the north side of the street, towards the east end of the town. A house was secured for a manse, and the church

¹Struther's *History of the Relief Church*, p. 288.

was built immediately behind it and abutting on it, the entrance to it being obtained from the street by a wide entry still existing on the east. The church was long in ruins, and is now done away with; and the site is now the garden of one of the two houses purchased and rebuilt by Mr Robert White a few years ago.

The congregation which had continued to assemble in the original church, without being connected with any denomination, had dwindled down to a mere handful at the time of Mr Scott's death in 1842; and the building, then in a sadly dilapidated condition, came into the possession of the Relief congregation, the descendants of the original possessors. But as the East Church was in great need of repairs, the congregation resolved to build a new church on the original site, which was done in 1843, in which the congregation now worships. Up to 1847 it was known as the Relief congregation, but by the union of the Secession and Relief Churches in that year it became as it now is the United Presbyterian Church of Colinsburgh.

CHAPTER X.

The Dissenting Ministers.

THE first minister of the church in Colinsburgh was also the first dissenting minister in the parish. This was REV. THOMAS COLIER, a native of Fife, and previously minister of the Presbyterian church in Ravenstonedale in Westmoreland. He was inducted on the 22nd October 1761, and along with Messrs Gillespie and Boston formed the first Relief presbytery.

He does not seem to have had a robust constitution, and the charge of so large and widely scattered a congregation made too heavy demands on his strength. In 1764 he had a lengthened illness, and the pulpit was supplied for four months by Mr Rikie, a probationer. This was done at the request of the congregation, for in their minutes they speak of the great loss they would sustain in not having sermon in the place, such as the danger of the people going back to intruding ministers, the loss of seat rents and the collections at the house door. These outward things had some weight with them, but chiefly they were concerned at the loss of their edification, for the cry of the people was to have sermon

continued to them. In the summer of 1768 Mr Colier's health again failed, and the congregation had to apply to the presbytery for pulpit supply, as the managers complained of difficulty in getting in the seat rents, "many of the people refusing to pay because they do not possess them, for there has not been sermon for eight weeks bygone." Efforts were made to obtain an assistant, but this was a difficult matter, the probationers then being so few; and Mr Scott of Auchtermuchty, to whom they had given their first call, showed them much kindness, often coming to preach to them and to baptize their children.

At length after a ministry amongst them of rather less than eight years, his death is recorded in their minutes, "Mr Colier's distress continued till it pleased the Lord to remove him from this world, his family and flock, on the 19th of July 1769, to the glorious presence of his Master." He was greatly mourned by the congregation, who loved him for his own and for his work's sake. He was a man of blameless reputation, a faithful preacher of the gospel, a minister of rare talents as well as of enlightened and liberal principles. The following testimony to his worth, dated 27th September 1769, is found in the record book of the praying society of Colinsburgh, the members of which belonged to his congregation:— "The mention of death, that alarming summoner of all men from this life, the good as well as the wicked, brings with redoubled force to our minds the remembrance of a departed shepherd who fixed the place of his residence amongst us. The decease of Mr Thomas Colier is an incident too recent and an event too per-

nicious to the interest of mankind and religion, to be easily obliterated from the minds of those who enjoyed the invaluable blessing of familiarity in conversation with him. His faithful labour, as far as he was able, has constituted his name memorable on earth; and through the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, will immortalize his memory through the endless ages of eternity."

The people, "being moved with tenderness to his family," presented Mrs Colier with an extra quarter's stipend, besides defraying all the funeral expenses. Nor did their kindness cease here, for they gave her occasional sums of money when she was in need, and for some years they paid her house rent.

The second minister was MR JAMES COWAN, who was ordained on the 25th July 1771. He was a native of the parish of Stow, and was born in February 1738. He was educated at the grammar school of Kelso, and afterwards pursued his literary and theological studies at the University of Edinburgh; and he obtained license as a preacher of the gospel from the Presbyterian Church in Northumberland. He had also acquired a knowledge of anatomy and physic; and, his brother said, he was able afterwards to give relief to many, even in desperate cases. He was always ready in the dead of a stormy night to rise from his bed, to save the life of any one, without fee or reward.

A hearty and unanimous call was given to him on the 3rd May 1770, subscribed that evening by four hundred and thirty communicants, and subsequently by many more. The presbytery sustained it as a regular gospel

call, but declined meantime to put it into his hands for acceptance; the reason apparently being that he did not agree with the other ministers in regard to terms of communion, and in other ways. He was allowed, however, to preach meanwhile in Colinsburgh, and after several delays he was ordained on 25th July 1771.

He took an extremely narrow view as to associating with ministers and members of other churches, and as has been already related, in consequence of his contumacy, he was excluded from the Relief synod in 1775. He tried to persuade his people to join the Church of Scotland as a chapel of ease, and he asked to be received back again into the Relief synod, but failed in this. He next endeavoured to form a new body, along with his brother, Rev. Robert Cowan of Newcastle and Rev. David Gellatly of Haddington, under the title of "The First constituted Presbytery of Relief;" but although they held several meetings and licensed one or two preachers, they entirely failed to form a new religious body. The last time he met with his brethren was at a meeting of this presbytery, at which Messrs Gellatly of Haddington and Fraser of Edinburgh were present. It was held in his bedroom, and he sat up in bed—his death bed, as it turned out to be, and being appointed moderator, he constituted the meeting with an earnest and pathetic prayer. He died shortly afterwards on the 15th April, 1795, in the fifty-eighth year of his age and the twenty-third of his ministry.

He was tall in stature, fully six feet high, and had a well conducted action in the pulpit, speaking with pleasant and penetrating energy. His friend Mr

Gellatly said of him that "he was a steady Presbyterian and rigidly Calvinistic. For no worldly consideration would he deviate from one article of his principles. He was humane and tender-hearted, and spent a great part of his time in visiting and relieving the distressed. He was a man of great sense and considerable learning."

He was succeeded by the REV. JOHN PATON, who had been licensed by Mr Cowan's presbytery, and who was ordained here on the 17th March, 1796, by Mr Gellatly. About 1801 he removed to Aberdeen.

He was followed by the REV. ALEXANDER SCOTT, who had been one of Mr Haldane's missionaries, and who laboured here for many years without being connected with any denomination. His congregation gradually dwindled away, the collections and seat rents fell off; and for many years, although his stipend was nominally sixty pounds a year, he only received what his people could give him, often less than half what had been promised. He preached frequently in the neighbourhood in the evenings, and by the collections at these services he added somewhat to his income. In 1820, when the present handsome church at Kilconquhar was being built, Dr Ferrie and his congregation worshipped in Mr Scott's church, then known as the West meeting house, the one congregation entering at eleven o'clock, and the other at a quarter to one. The members of the parish church paid seat rents during the time they occupied the building, and the proceeds amounting to fifty pounds were given him as a present.

It was during the early years of his ministry, and in

the west church where he preached, that the first Sabbath school in the district was opened. It was conducted by Mr Scott, and by Mr Fernie, the saddler, who belonged to Barnyards church, and James Rodger, the precentor in Barnyards. Mrs Lindsay of Balcarres took some interest in it, and she provided lights in the winter months—tallow candles, which served to make the darkness visible. Mr Fernie's prayers were very long, and the tasks were very heavy, one little girl having to recite from memory the whole of Habakkuk's prayer.

Mr Scott was a well known figure in Colinsburgh, with his snuff box and his other peculiarities. The folks used sometimes to say as he passed, "There goes auld Scottie wi' his tartan rachan,"—an old-fashioned large cloak. His preaching was evangelical and scriptural, and it was entirely devoid of the rhetorical style which characterised the sermons of so many of the Relief ministers. His discourses were modelled on those of the early Seceders, having many heads and particulars, and sub-divisions under these again, but always full of gospel truth. He died somewhat suddenly on the 28th July, 1842.

These four ministers had all preached in the original church built in 1760; but, as stated in the preceding chapter, the members who adhered to the Relief synod at the time of the communion controversy had built another church for themselves. The first minister of the East church was REV. JOHN JAMIESON, who came from St Ninian's, and who was ordained on the 3rd July, 1801. His ministry here, however, was a very short one, as he was translated to Bellshill, Bothwell, on the 29th July,

1802. He died suddenly, having taken ill in the pulpit, and expired a few hours afterwards in the manse in February 1832, in the fifty-sixth year of his age and the thirty-first of his ministry. There are none now living who recollect him, but his name is remembered, for his initials are on the communion plate and tokens which were long used by the congregation.

After a short vacancy the congregation gave a call to REV. WILLIAM REID, previously of the Relief Church, Haddington, and he was admitted on the 27th July 1803. The call, as was customary at that time, was not simply an invitation to him to become their minister, but was a regular bond for the payment of the stipend, signed in the presence of witnesses, and with Government stamps to the value of ten shillings and sixpence impressed upon it. As the wording of it is quite different from modern calls, it may be of interest to give it here:—

“We, the elders, managers and other members of the Relief Congregation in Colinsburgh, being vacant by the translation of our late pastor the Rev. John Jamieson to Bothwell, and being well assured by good information and by our own experience, of the ministerial abilities, learning, piety and prudence, as also the suitableness to our capacities of the gifts of you the Rev. William Reid, late minister of the late Relief congregation at Haddington, have agreed, (provided we meet with the approbation and concurrence of the reverend the Relief presbytery of Dysart,) to invite, call, and entreat; Likeas we, by these presents, do heartily invite, call, and entreat you the Rev. William Reid to

undertake the office of a pastor amongst us, and the charge of our souls. And upon accepting of this our call, we hereby promise you all dutiful respect and obedience in the Lord. We also promise you a suitable maintenance according to your station as a minister of the gospel, viz. we promise and engage to pay you annually the sum of eighty pounds sterling money, to be paid per advance at four terms in the year, viz. Whitsunday, Lammas, Martinmas, and Candlemas; the first payment to be made at the first of these terms after your admission amongst us, and so forth per advance at these terms during your incumbency. And for the period which may intervene betwixt the time of your admission and the first of the said terms, you will receive payment in proportion to the said sum of eighty pounds sterling. Moreover we promise you a suitable house to dwell in, with a garden annexed to it. In witness whereof these presents, written on stamped paper by the Rev. Robert Walker, minister at Cupar, at Colinsburgh this fourteenth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and three, are subscribed by the managers, elders, and members of the congregation before these witnesses, James Meldrum, labourer at Grangemuir, and Alexander Patison, tailor in Colinsburgh."

The elders who signed it were John Bennet, John Johnston and David Mather. The managers were, Alexander Strachan, David Paterson, John Mentiplay, John Wallace, Thomas Forgan, Thomas Foggo, Alexander Annan, Thomas Mathison, Alexander Paxton and John Howieson. The call was signed by a hundred

and thirty-five members. This was a large number to be present to give the call, and as no other opportunity was given of signing, there must have been many others necessarily absent. There were about two hundred members at a later period, and it is not likely there were fewer then. It is interesting to observe among the signatures that of William Grub, which appeared so often in the letters of the Praying Society thirty years earlier; and several of the names have their modern representatives on the communion roll at the present day.

Mr Reid caught cold while fulfilling a presbyterial appointment at Strathkinnes, which led to his death on 7th September, 1809, in the forty-first year of his age and the thirteenth of his ministry. He was survived by his widow and three children, the youngest of whom, Miss Reid, was only an infant at her father's death, who lived to reach her seventy-fifth year, and who was connected with the congregation all her life.

The next minister was the REV. DAVID RUSSELL, from the congregation of Tollcross, Glasgow. He was born in 1785, and traced his descent on the father's side from covenanters who were engaged in the battle of Bothwell Bridge. He was brought up in connection with the Church of Scotland, but joined the Relief Church on account of his dislike to the law of patronage. He was ordained on the 5th February, 1811, and was translated to Allars Church, Hawick, in the following year; and he laboured there for nine years, when he was translated to Errol in Perthshire, where he died in 1868, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. He had nine sons, of

whom the eldest was Mr Scott Russell, the well-known engineer, the designer of the Great Eastern steamship, and one of the most eminent of modern shipbuilders.

He was followed by REV. JAMES TURNBULL from Hutchesontown congregation, Glasgow, who was ordained on the 28th September 1813, and who remained here only seven years, after which he became minister of the Calton Church, Glasgow.

The next minister was the REV. WILLIAM MARSHALL from Dovehill congregation, who was ordained on the 7th August 1823. After a ministry of little more than six years, he resigned his charge and went to America, and became minister of the Presbyterian Church at Peekskill, where he found a wider scope for his energies than in Colinsburgh.

After a lengthened vacancy of about five years, the REV. ARCHIBALD CUMMING, previously of Ceres, became minister of the congregation in June 1834. He was then an old man, having been born in 1766, and ordained at Newlands in 1803. It was during his ministry that the East church was discontinued, and the present church, in which the congregation now worships, erected on the site of the original one. He died in 1845, in the forty-second year of his ministry. In Mr Cumming's time a Sabbath school was taught in the East church by James Rodgers, Barnyards, and Alexander Morris, Colinsburgh.

The REV. ANDREW DICKIE was ordained on the 16th December 1845, but only remained here about two years, having been translated to St Paul's Church, Aberdeen, where he remained till his death in 1895.

The next minister was the REV. JOHN C. JACKSON, a native of Jedburgh, who was ordained on the 19th February 1850. After an earnest ministry here of nineteen years he became minister of Gorbals, now Elgin Street Church in Glasgow, from which he removed to Crail in 1878. He retired from the active duties of the ministry in 1889, and now resides in Edinburgh.

His successor was the REV. T. BOSTON JOHNSTONE, from Limekilns, who was ordained in June 1871. He accepted a call to Arthur Street Church, Edinburgh, in 1875, from which he removed to St Andrew's Church, Bolton, in 1882. It was during his ministry, and mainly through his exertions, that the congregation obtained their handsome clock and bell, so useful to the community.

Of the present writer, the fourteenth minister in Colinsburgh, it need only be said that he is a native of Edinburgh, that his ancestors on both the father's and mother's side were connected with the Secession Church from its commencement, and that he was ordained on the 21st December, 1875. A few years after his settlement, the church was painted and greatly improved, the pulpit was lowered and the old-fashioned canopy removed, and the seats in the area were widened and fitted with sloping backs. In 1893 a handsome and commodious hall was built behind the church for the use of the Prayer-meeting and the Bible class, which also serves for the minister's vestry; and in February 1894, a fine-toned American organ was procured, and is now used in the praises of the congregation, the necessary

funds for both having been obtained by a bazaar and subscriptions from the members. At a soiree held to inaugurate the hall and the introduction of instrumental music, Mr Dick was presented with new pulpit robes and a purse of sovereigns by the ladies of the congregation.

The other dissenting ministers in the parish were those of the Secession Church in Barnyards. This congregation originated in one of the Praying Societies so common over the country in the last century, and which did so much to maintain vital godliness in the land in an age of moderatism. There were such societies in the parish of Cameron, St Andrews, Denino, Carnbee, Ceres, and Kilconquhar ; and these six societies formed themselves into an association, called "The correspondence of the East of Fife." They met in one another's houses for prayer and mutual edification; and the representatives of each met once a month in the house of Mr Robert Leslie, farmer in Radernie, as being most central for them all. There were three Robert Leslies, grandfather, father, and son ; and the minutes of the meetings were kept for about a century. In the year 1730, the association consisted of twenty-four members, and they all joined the Secession at its commencement in 1733. When the Ceres Secession church was formed in 1738, the Kilconquhar members of the correspondence were connected with it ; and a few years later, when the Kennoway congregation was founded, most of the members attended there, as being nearer to them, for in these days going from ten to twelve miles to church was a common thing. They were too few to form a congregation for

themselves in Kilconquhar ; but towards the end of last century a number of families from other parts of the country who belonged to the Seceders settled in Barnyards, and they were formed into a congregation by the Burgher presbytery of Perth.¹ The church was built in 1795, containing 270 sittings.

The first minister here was the REV. JAMES DICK, who was ordained on the 16th August, 1796. The praying society of Cameron still existed, and then consisted of five members ; a meeting had been fixed for that night, but the minutes bear that no one came, as they were at Mr Dick's ordination at Barnyards. He left a legacy of five pounds to the poor of the parish ; and Dr Ferrie, in minuting the receipt of the money, said that it would be given to such poor as belonged to the Burgher congregation. A marble memorial slab was placed by the congregation inside the church on the west wall, with the following inscription on it:—"Erected by the members of this congregation as a tribute of respect to the memory of Reverend James Dick, who was for 28 years minister of the United Associate congregation of Kilconquhar. He died the 22nd day of Dec. 1823, aged 54.—The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

The next minister of Barnyards was the REV. GEORGE KENNEDY. He was born at Leadhills in the upper ward of Lanarkshire in January, 1799. He was educated at the university of Edinburgh, and studied theology under the celebrated Dr Lawson at Selkirk, and afterwards under Dr John Dick in Glasgow ; and was ordained at Barnyards on the 19th October, 1825. He was not long

¹McKelvie's *Annals and Statistics*, pp. 138, 139.

settled before he had the opportunity of proving his gifts. On the day appointed for the ordination of Mr Macrae at Lathones there had been a heavy fall of snow, and none of the ministers appointed to officiate were able to be present ; and it was not till an hour after the time fixed for the service that the presbytery could be constituted. One of the ministers present preached the sermon he had given to his own people on the previous Sabbath ; and it fell to Mr Kennedy to preside at the ordination and address both minister and people ; and although the duty was quite unexpected he discharged it in an admirable way.

Mr Kennedy was a useful minister and greatly esteemed by his people. He resigned his charge in March, 1854, and after residing for a few years in Kilconquhar he went to Edinburgh, where he died in April 1863, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. His only brother, also a minister, was settled in London, Canada West, and on one of his visits to him Mr Kennedy organized a congregation in Delaware, and ministered to it for a considerable time.

After Mr Kennedy's resignation, the congregation not being in a position to call another minister, was dissolved by the presbytery ; and the church is now held by the Cupar presbytery in the name of trustees appointed by them, and is used occasionally for public worship, chiefly by the present writer.

CHAPTER XI.

Later Days.

DURING the past two centuries of its existence the town of Colinsburgh has moved on in the quiet tenor of its way. Such troubles as the rebellions of 1715 and 1745 scarcely did more than cause a ripple on the surface of its life. It has suffered a good deal of late years from the agricultural depression, but it has never felt the fluctuations of trade in the same way as the cities and commercial centres have done.

At the time of the Reform Bill in 1832, when the measure was being discussed in Parliament, demonstrations were made by some of the inhabitants, and a drum and fife band marched between Colinsburgh and Kilconquhar. When the Bill was passed a public dinner was held in Kilconquhar in honour of the occasion, the tables being spread in the school playground, and the Colinsburgh men marched down in procession, carrying their knives and forks in their pockets. The school children imitated their elders, and paraded the town with a tin pitcher and a penny whistle for music, but this gave offence to the

ruling powers, and the threat of a sound thrashing from the teacher chilled their juvenile enthusiasm for politics.

Among the later inhabitants mention may be made of John Scott, descended from Covenanting ancestors in Newburn parish. He was at one time farmer in Balbuthie, as his father had been before him, but he was more successful as a raiser of turnip seed than in making the farm profitable to himself. He was a great reader until blindness came upon him, and he was exceptionally well read in theology, his views on some points, though generally accepted now, being then in advance of his time. He published a treatise on the evidences of the Christian religion, which had a wide circulation, and also several pamphlets, such as "Five errors in theology corrected," which was highly approved of by the well-known Rev. George Gilfillan of Dundee; and one of his leaflets, "God is love," was circulated in thousands among the soldiers and sailors engaged in the Crimean war. He died in 1877, in his eighty-fifth year, and at his own request was buried in Newburn by the side of his mother.

Another well-known inhabitant was James Thomson, the house painter, who died in 1886, in his eightieth year. He was an artist of some ability, as his copy of Raeburn's portrait of Burns and his pictures of Colinsburgh and Kilconquhar show. He left many drawings, and he possessed a great many works of art and articles of vertu. One of his pieces, pleasing in itself though not of high poetic merit, written in 1834, may be quoted here slightly amended :—

ADDRESS TO THE ISLE OF MAY.

Thou beacon light ! O Isle of May,
Bright be thy beaming star !
Guide thou the mariner's watery way
Who sees thee from afar.

Thou shin'st at night where billows dash,
And storms around thee rage,
While thunders roll and lightnings flash,
And seas with skies engage.

There thou hast shone in years gone past,
Shine on through years to come !
When we are gone from earth at last
To our eternal home.

About fifty years ago a considerable number of the inhabitants emigrated to America and Australia, as so many did at that time from other districts in Scotland; and it was then that the following lines called "Bonnie Colinsburgh" were composed—by whom I have not been able so learn :—

Fare ye weel to Colinsburgh,
That canty wee bit toon ;
Ye wadna find the marrow o't,
In a' the country roon.
For the lads are a' sae hearty,
And the lassies aye sae braw,
And we'll often think upon them,
When we're far, far awa'.

I've wandered up Balcarres den,
And roond about the tower,
And doon and roond Kinneuchar loch,
When the nicht began to lour.
I've climbed up the sunny sides
O' bonnie Largo Law ;
And I'll often think upon them,
When I'm far, far awa'.

I've wandered roond Balcaskie Hoose,
And up by Comilaw ;
And roond about by Gillingshill,
When the nicht began to fa'.
I've wandered up by Easter Kellie,
And roond the Kellie Law ;
And I'll often think upon them,
When I'm far, far awa'.

I've daundered roond by Gibliston Hoose,
And up by Clockhert Haw ;
And roond about the Cat's Craig wood,
When my freends were far awa'.
But fare ye weel to Colinsburgh,
Its lads and lassies and a',
And I'll often think upon them,
When I'm far, far awa'.

The inhabitants of Colinsburgh have always been ready to avail themselves of modern improvements. They were the first in the district, for instance, to introduce gas for public use. The Colinsburgh Gas Light Company was formed on the 8th October 1841, a capital of five hundred pounds was subscribed, and the works were erected in the following year. The first directors were Messrs John Wood, banker, David Carstairs, tanner, Thomas Gordon, draper, John Todd, surgeon, David Matthewson, butcher, and James Briggs, auctioneer. The offices and shops and many of the dwelling houses were immediately lighted by it, great interest was excited, and many questions were asked as to how it was made. One lady, when visiting her daughter, was told that it came up from the works at the lodge. "Preserve us a', woman," she said, "hoo dae they get the wick in away doon there?" The town was first lighted up on the evening of the October fair, and

the usual crowd was greatly augmented by the novelty of the new illuminant. One waggish stall keeper sent a man down to Kilconquhar to beat a drum, and to invite the people to come up to Colinsburgh, where they would see one of the seven wonders of the world. A great number came up, even the school children got out of bed to see the gas, and the trader reaped the profit in selling his entire stock of confectionery.

The original directors in their contract of copartnery had shown their shrewdness by declaring the object of the company to be "the distillation of coal, oil, or other substances, so as to procure inflammable air or gas for the illumination of the said town and suburbs thereof." And again Colinsburgh came to the front, as it was the first town in Scotland to make gas from paraffin oil. The necessary alterations on the works were made by the Patent Paraffin Gas Light Company of Kirkintilloch, and the new gas was issued in the spring of 1887. The oil gas is perhaps a shade more expensive, but it has undoubtedly a much greater illuminating power, and it gives a softer and more pleasant light.

The town has also been supplied for a long time with water by gravitation. The first supply was brought by a small pipe from Bettyfield, near the Home Merry wood, and led into a trough at the well strand, from which the inhabitants supplied themselves. About 1850, largely through the instrumentality of the late Mr John Wood and of Mr Braid senior, water was taken into the houses from a burn that comes down from Rires, and which now supplies Balcarres gardens. The present supply is obtained from four springs which flow

nto cisterns in the park opposite the dovecot, near where Balcarres West Mains farm steading used to be. There are three cisterns, holding two thousand gallons each, and there is room for other two in the same piece of ground. An additional supply was added in 1893 from the Green's park at Balcarres, which never fails summer and winter. It is supposed to come from an old coal pit, but being very hard it is only used when the cisterns fed by the other springs are becoming emptied.

A complete drainage system was introduced in 1886, and the sanitary officer under the County Council reported in regard to the water and drainage that Colinsburgh was the only perfect village out of twenty-six in the St Andrews district.

The discontinuance of the old fairs led to the formation of the East of Fife Agricultural Society. It was instituted about sixty years ago, and so great has been the changes since that time that Mr Bowman, Newark, is the only one of the original members now left. It was discontinued for a year or two, and in December 1874 it was reorganised, and has continued in a flourishing state since then—largely owing to the fostering care of Mr Flockhart, who has for long been its secretary, and on whose grounds at Fairfield the annual show is held. The crowds that attend it remind one of the baronial fairs held here for so long, and the progress made is seen from the difference in the prize lists. That of 1846 contained nine entries, and gave only twelve pounds ten shillings in prizes, besides a few half-guinea sweepstakes for cattle, horses, sheep, and

seed corn, growing corn, and sundries; while last year the entries numbered 550, and the amount given in prizes was £183 11s 6d.

The Volunteer movement was warmly taken up at its inception in the Colinsburgh district. A public meeting was held here in November 1859, under the presidency of Sir Coutts Lindsay, the representative of the "Lindsays gallant and gay," and a Rifle Corps was then organized. The first officers were, General Briggs of Strathairly, captain; the late Mr Walter Davidson of Cairnie, lieutenant; and Mr W. R. Ketchen, Elie, ensign; and thirty-nine members were sworn in at Kilconquhar school in March, 1860. A sum of £334 was raised for expenses, with £98 more for equipments, and the movement owed much of its success to Mr Davidson, who acted as secretary. The company was present at the great reviews in Edinburgh in 1860 and 1881, and since then has taken its full share in the labours and honours of field days and shooting competitions. On one occasion the drill sergeant reported that so earnest were the men in their work that "they sweated at standing at ease!"

In January of the present year, long service medals were presented to ex-Quartermaster Sergeant James Morris, who has the rare distinction of having been present at the two Royal reviews of 1860 and 1881; and to ex-Colour Sergeant Thomas Aitken, who retired in 1892 after twenty-one year's service.

The company is at present stronger than it has been at any time since its formation, there being last year ninety-seven efficient on the roll. The present com-

manding officer is Major Dawson, who has been thirty years altogether in the volunteer service, and to whom the company is largely indebted for its present efficiency.

The Annual Social Meeting is a distinctive feature in the social life of Colinsburgh. It was originated by Mr Peter Proudfoot, then parochial teacher in Kilconquhar, now in Leuchars. The first meeting was held in Kilconquhar schoolroom in January 1859, when so many meetings were held over Scotland to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Robert Burns, the great national poet. The following year it was held in the schoolroom in Colinsburgh, and since then it has been kept up with unflagging enthusiasm. At first it was conducted like a private tea party, the evening being filled up with songs and parlour games. It became so popular that tickets of admission were eagerly sought after, and then it assumed the character of a public soiree. For many years the heads of families in Colinsburgh were always present, as well as the young people; and admission tickets were only given to outsiders after all the inhabitants were supplied. Of late years it has become more a concert, interspersed with short addresses by local speakers, and a ball; and the attendance is so large that the accommodation in the schoolroom has of late years been taxed to the utmost, nearly two hundred being usually present. Many will remember the genial speeches of the late Mr Irvine, and how he used to apply the words in Tennyson's "Brook" to the social meeting,

"Men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever."

The Colinsburgh Flower Show was for many years the premier one in the district. It began in 1865 by Mr Henderson, the teacher, holding a show of wild flowers in the schoolroom, chiefly for the scholars; and two years afterwards it was carried out on a larger scale by him and Mr David Niven, with the aid of a committee, when flowers, fruit, and vegetables were shown. It was afterwards held in a tent at Balcarres, by the kindness of Sir Coutts Lindsay, and latterly of the Earl of Crawford; and permission to view the terrace gardens, and to spend the day within the grounds, has always been one of its attractive features. The growth of so many flower shows in the district, however, has naturally diminished its popularity, and no show was held last year, though it is hoped it will yet be carried on with renewed success.

The inhabitants of Colinsburgh have always been keen curlers, and the ample sheet of water on Kilconquhar loch has provided ample facilities for "the roaring game." The Hercules Club was instituted in 1835, and four years afterwards it was affiliated with the Royal Caledonian Curling Club; and the members have won many medals and have generally been able to hold their own in public and private matches. A new departure was recently made in the formation of a Hercules Ladies Curling Club, with Mrs Outhwaite, Craigforth, as president, Mrs Scott Davidson, Cairnie, vice-president, and Mrs Borrowman, Elie, secretary and treasurer. A curler's court was held at Cairnie on the 18th February, 1895, when twenty ladies were initiated; and the meeting is a historic one, as being the first ladies

club, which as a club had been made curlers. The points medal presented to the lady curlers was won by Mrs Scott Davidson, and this is believed to be the first curling medal played for by lady "handlers of the cove." The Kilconquhar Junior, instituted in 1855, was largely made up of Colinsburgh men, and was re-organised by them in 1893 as the Colinsburgh Club.

For many years the Gardener's Hall—the upper flat of the two-storeyed house near the gaswork—served the purpose of a public hall for the town. It was connected with the order of Free Gardeners, of a somewhat similar nature but quite distinct from the Freemasons. At one time there was a lodge in nearly every village in Scotland, many of which were never connected with the grand lodge; and no mention of the Colinsburgh lodge is to be found in any of the books or documents of the Order still existing. At one time no one was admitted to the Order except practical gardeners, as the movement originated in the landowners and resident gentry of the district holding regular meetings, to which all their gardeners were invited to hear lectures on horticulture and cognate subjects, but the scope of the lodge was enlarged to embrace men of all other trades and occupations. They had a public procession on the king's birthday, when they marched through Colinsburgh and down to Kilconquhar, accompanied by an instrumental band.

The society fell off, as so many of them did in other places, and a good many years ago the hall was sold to the late Mr James Kidd, Mayfield, and after passing through other hands it was turned into a dwelling

house. The few members left were loth to part with their hall; and when one of them lamented his loss he was humourously told that he could carry away his share of the building in a wheelbarrow. It was here that the United Presbyterian congregation worshipped in 1843, while their present church was being erected; and it continued for a time to be used for public meetings, concerts and popular lectures. One of these concerts was given by Mr James Morris, and when he called on the proprietrix, who lived in the house below, to ask for the use of it, his request was frankly granted on one condition—there was to be no stamping of the feet, and applause was to be shown only by clapping of hands or cheers; and he was warned by the lady that she would sit near the gas meter, and would turn off the lights if her condition should be infringed. When the meeting began Mr Morris stated the condition on which the use of the hall had been given, and he earnestly besought the audience to observe it, but the temptation was too strong to be resisted. The noise and stamping of feet were too pronounced to be overlooked, and the gas was at once extinguished!

By permission of the School Board the schoolroom has since been used for all public gatherings, but it was felt that a larger and more convenient hall was required. At length in 1882, Lady Coutts Lindsay—who always took a warm interest in the wellbeing of Colinsburgh—held a Bazaar in Balcarres House to raise funds for the purpose, and about £250 were realised. This was insufficient for the purpose, and the matter was held in abeyance for a time, until Mr Scott Davidson of Cairnie

took it up with characteristic energy, and carried it through to a successful completion. In 1893 a bazaar was held in Balcarres grounds on the day of the annual Flower Show, when most valuable assistance was given by Eudoxie, Countess of Lindsay, and the other ladies of the county families, and a further sum of about £900 was realised. In the following year a large and commodious hall, comfortably seated for three hundred, was built at the east of the public schoolroom, partly on the site of Lady Lindsay's sewing school; and it was formally opened by the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Crawford on the 25th October 1895, and it will no doubt be a great public boon for many a year to come to the inhabitants of Colinsburgh and surrounding neighbourhood.

INDEX.

ACRES included in feus, 16
 Acts of Privy Council quoted, 125
 Agricultural Society, 180
 Aitken, Thomas, 181
 Alehouse, the first, 13
 Altar in Kilconquhar church, 66
 Anderson, D., teacher, 88
 Anderson's *Martyrs of the Bass* quoted, 124
 Anstruther, Sir Alexander, 85
 Apron men, the, 30
 Auld Robin Gray, ballad of, 48
 Aytone, Rev. Thomas, 82

BAILIES of the barony, 61
 Bailie's *Letters* quoted, 75.
 Balbuthie farm, rent of, 42;
 titles of, 43
 Balcarres, Alexander, first Earl
 of, 45; losses of, 54; signs the
 Covenant, 121

— Charles, second Earl of, 46
 — Colin, third Earl of, ac-
 quires Nether Rires, 11; named
 Colinsburgh after himself, 18;
 prisoner in Edinburgh Castle,
 20, 49; birth, 45; goes to court,
 46; his first wedding, 46; his
 subsequent marriages, 47;
 offices of state held by him,
 48; letter of, 49; exile, 50;
 sacrifices he made for the
 Stuarts, 51; takes part in ris-
 ing of 1715, 51; carelessness in
 money matters, 52; his death,
 52

— chapel, 44
 — craig, 133
 — estate in seventeenth cen-
 tury, 41
 — House built, 43
 — Mains, east and west, 42
 — Mill, situation, 12; tenants
 of estate thirled to, 59
 Balchrystie estate, 12
 — Folke, 140

Balfour, Alexander, rebel arms, 37
 Balmer, Rev. Dr. Berwick, 32
 Balniel, added to Balcarres, 41;
 rent of, 42

Barnyards church, 172; cottars
 fined for non-conformity, 132
 Barony Courts, powers of, 57;
 tenants must attend, 59; meet-
 ings and clerks, 62

Bass Rock, prisons of, 124

Bayne, Alexander, teacher, 88

Bent, William, teacher, 88

Beggars' badges, 100

Bellmen of Colinsburgh, 64

Belt, standing in the, 114

Bennet, Charles, first bailie, 16,
 53, 61, 97

Bennet, Colin, vintner, 16

— Colin, teacher, 88

Berwick, Nelly, 31

Bicker tree, 60

Bier for the poor, 97

Bird Davie, 28

Blackadder, Rev. John, 133;
Memoirs quoted, 134

Blasphemy, case of, 116

Blodweit, case of, 62

Bogle, Thomas, surgeon, 38

"Bonnie Colinsburgh," song, 177

Bonthron, David, reminiscences,
 34

Booke of the Kirk quoted, 68

Borrowman, Mrs. Elie, 183

Boston, Rev. Thomas, 137, 146

Bowman, James, 180

Braid, William, 179

Brewster houses, 14, 107

Bridges repaired by session, 18

Briggs, General, 181

Briggs, James, 178

Brown, David, cobbler, 28

Brown, Dr John, Edinburgh, 32

Brown's *Covenanters of the Merse*
 quoted, 63

Bruce, Archbishop of St An-
 drews, 80

- Burgh of barony, founded, 53;
its powers, 54; the bailies, 61
Burials in Balcarres chapel, 44
- CADGER, The King's, 27
Cairnie park, 60
Call, form of, 167
Calland, George, 88
Campbell, Lady Margaret, 48
Cargill, Rev. Donald, 127
Carmichael, William, 129
— Rev. John, 71; imprisoned
for non-conformity, 72; his
deathbed, 73
Carnegie, Lady Jean, 47
Carstairs, Thomas, 14
Centenarians, 36
Chalders, value of, 43
Chalmers, Rev. John, induction,
84; opposition to him, 84, 135
— William, changed his name
to Bethune, 85
Chanzie, or chain, 114
Charlton estate, 10
Charters, early, 21
Chirritie, meaning of, 42
Church attendance, 90
— discipline, 104, 152
— hall in Colinsburgh, 171
— officers, 118, 151
Clerks of barony court, 62
Clidesdale, Rev. James, 83, 135
Cloud of Witnesses, 126
Collier, Rev. Thomas, his call,
142; induction, 144; illness
and death, 162
Colinsburgh, situation of, 10;
founded, 15
— Church built, 138; cost of,
139
— Church Minutes quoted,
136, 138, 141, 143, 148
— Congregation divided, 159
Collections at kirk, 98; in Col-
insburgh, 152
Communion controversy, 154
— plate, 96, 151
— services, 93, 149
— tokens, 95, 150, 167
Cook, D., Anstruther, quoted, 42
- Corbitt, John, bellman, 64
Couper, Colin, surgeon, 30
Covenanters, 120
Cowan, Rev. James, 154; his
call, 163; tries to form new
presbytery, and death, 164
Crawford, Earl of, 57, 185
Crofts in Colinsburgh, 23
Cumberland, Lord, 53
Cumming, Rev. Archibald, 170
Curfew bell, 64
Curling clubs, 183
- DAVIDSON of Cairnie, Walter, 181
— J. Scott, 185
— Mrs Scott, 183
Dawson, C. G., his house, 16;
his lands, 59; Major of Volun-
teers, 182
Deacon, office of, 101
Dewar, Mrs, her house, 16; a
centenarian, 36
Dick, Rev. James, 173
— Rev. Robert, 171
Dickie, Rev. Andrew, 170
Disturbances in church, 91
Drainage of Colinsburgh, 180
Drinking habits, 39
Drummond, Rev. James, his
induction, 81; imprisoned for
preaching, 123; sent to the
Bass, 124; ill-health, 126; death
81
Dudingston of St Ford, 82
Duncan's *Scottish Sanctuary*
quoted, 142.
- EAST church in Colinsburgh, 159
Elders in Colinsburgh, 145, 168
— under discipline, 105
Elie disjoined from Kiloanquhar,
67
Engagement of 1647, 121
Esq. first used in minutes, 82
- FACTORS of Balcarres estate, 24
Fairfield, 24
Farm rents formerly, 42
Fencing the tables, 94

Ferrie, Rev. Dr., promotes Colinsburgh school, 34; his Statistical account quoted, 36; weather notes, 39; his settlement, 85; his name on Communion tokens, 95; school built at Earlsferry, 103; worships in Colinsburgh, 165
 Ferrier, Rev. R., Largo, 140
 Feuars, earliest, 15
 Feus, price of, 23
 Field preaching, 133
 Fines on Covenanters, 131
 Fines by kirk-session, 105, 113
 Fleming, George, Balbuthie, 128
 130
 Flint, Rev. Professor, 86
 Flockhart, John, 18, 24, 180
 Flower Show, 183
 Flyting and scolding, 110
 Forret, Rev. David, inducted, 76; a Covenanter, 77; argues with Earl of Rothes, 78; his opinion of Archbishop Sharp, 78; friend of the Balcarras Family, 79; requires covenantants to be signed, 121
 Foundling, story of, 25
 Fountainhall's *Historical Notices* quoted, 126
 Fugitives denounced, 133
 Funerals, 119

 GALLY Law, executions at, 60
 Gardener's Hall, 184
 Gas first made by Thoms, 29; introduced in Colinsburgh, 178
 Gillespie, Alexander, called to Kilconquhar, 82
 — Rev. Thomas, 137, 140, 146
 Gourlay, blacksmiths, 29
 Gordon, David, draper, 178.
 Grant's *White Cockade* quoted, 125
 Guilan, Archibald, centenarian, 37

 Hamilton, Kilbrachmont, out in the '45, 37
 Handfasting, 105
 Hay, Rev. Alexander, 81, 96

Hay, Laurence, sentenced to death, 126
 — Rev. William, 80, 96
 Hendersons in Kilbrachmont, 129, 131
 Henderson, Rev. Alexander, 75
 — J. B., teacher, 34, 183
 Hogg, Mrs, centenarian, 36
 Houses in early days, 21
 Houston, Alexander, teacher, 88
 Hutt, Alexander, 17

 IRELAND, Alexander, bellman, 64
 Irvine, Rev. Walter, 87, 182
 Isle of May, verses on, 177

 JACOBITE rebellions, 37, 51
 Jamieson, Rev. John, 166
 Johnstone, Rev. T. B., 171
 Johnston's *Treasury of Scottish Covenant* quoted, 120
 Jongs, the, 114
 Justice of peace courts, 58

 KAIN, commuted into money, 23
 Kennedy, Rev. George, 173
 Kennedy, Dr John, Elie, 61
 Kerr, Lady Jean, 48
 Ketchen, W. R., Elie, 181
 Kidd, James, Mayfield, 151, 184
 Kilconquhar church consecrated, 65; pre-Reformation clergy, 65; derivation and varied spelling, 66
 — Loch, 51, 66, 112
 Kinnear, Mrs, Kirkcaldy, 56
 Kirk, James, 131

 LADIES' Curling Club, 183
 Lamont's *Diary* quoted, 44, 45, 77, 78, 79
 Legge, Rev. Alexander, 87
 Leslie, General, 121
 — Norman, 43
 — Robert, 172
 Lindsay, Ladies Henrietta and Sophia, 133
 — John, Lord Menmuir, 41
 — Hon. Robert, at Colinsburgh fair, 56; purchases Bal-

- carres, 56; story of, 57; builds the hotel, 63
 — Sir Coutts, sells Balcarres, 57; additions to House, 43; Venetian gates, 61; inaugurated volunteer movement in Colinsburgh, 181
 — Lady Coutts, 185
Lives of the Lindsays quoted, 47, 48, 51, 52
 Loans given to members, 99
 Logie, Leonard, vicar, 66
 Lowrie, John, barber, 30
 Lumaden, Alexander, teacher, 33
- MACKIE, James, teacher, 33
 McCaskie, Alexander, teacher, 34
McCrie's Story of Scottish Church quoted, 89
 Mackenzie, Lady Anna, wife of first Earl of Balcarres, 45; marries Earl of Argyle, 79
 McLaurin, James, teacher, 88
 McPherson, Donald, teacher, 34
 Managers, at church door, 141; names of first in Colinsburgh, 144; how chosen, 149; in East church, 168
 Manse in Colinsburgh, 143
 Markets in Colinsburgh, 55
 Marriages, irregular, 152
Marshall's Historic Scenes quoted, 58
 Marshall, Rev. William, 170
 Martyrs' tomb in Cupar, 127
 Mathers, David, 56
 Matthewson, David, 178
Maxwell's Bygone Scotland quoted, 105
 Mathison, John, Kilconquhar, 95
 Melville's *Diary* quoted, 68, 71
Memoirs of Lady Anna Mackenzie quoted, 77, 79, 133
 Miles, John, weaver, 31
 — widow, 36
 Milligan, Rev. Dr. 86
 Minute books of Kilconquhar Session, 47, 52, 88, 126
 Minutes of first Relief presbytery, 145
- Minutes of Presbytery of St Andrews* quoted, 77, 112
 — of *Synod of Fife* quoted, 72
 Mitchell, David, Balbuthie, 132
 — David, Session-clerk, 88
 — Robert, teacher, 88
 Moncrieff, Rev. Andrew, 68
 Money boxes stolen, 100
 — lent to members, 153
 Monro, Rev. David, 76, 112
 Montrose, Marquis of, 121
Morren's Annals of Assembly quoted, 84
 Morris, Alexander, 151
 — James, 151, 181, 185
 Munro, J. W., teacher, 34
 Murray, Sir Robert, 121
 Myles, Rev. David, Newburn, 82
- NASSAU, Mad. Mauritia de, 46
 Nether Rires, belonged to Be-ton family, 10; sold to Sir William Bruce, 11; disposed to Earl Colin, 11; first houses in, 13; early inhabitants, 15
 Niven, David, 183
- OBLIGATION of tenants and feuars, 59
 Oil gas introduced, 179
 Opposition to Popish Bill, 35
 Orphan, Margaret, 26
 Outhwaite, Mrs. Elie, 183
- PASMENTS on Dress, 74
 Paton, Rev. John, 165
 Paxton, Alexander, weaver, 30
 — George, bellman, 64
 Penny bridals, 26
 Pestilence, the, 123
 Petrie, William, teacher, 32
 Philip, Adam, sentenced to death 126; escaped from prison, 128; kirk-officer, 128
 Pitcorrhie farms, Easter and Wester, 42
Pittenweem Register quoted, 36
 Pittilloch, Andrew, sentenced to death, 126; his goods escheated 127

Poor in Nether Rires, 15
 — provision for, 98, 152; Assessment for, 100
 Praying Societies, 172
 Precentors in Colinsburgh, 151
 Presbyterial visitation, 126
 Prie, Andrew, 131
 Prince of Orange, 49
 Promiscuous hearing, 91
 Proudfoot, Peter, teacher, 88, 182

READERS in church, 89
 Reform Bill demonstrations, 175
 Register of Baptisms quoted, 45
 — of Great Seal quoted, 53, 66
 — of ministers and readers quoted, 67
 Reid, Rev. William, 167
 Relief presbytery formed, 145
 Rents paid in grain, 42
 Repentance stool, 113, 153
 Rev. first given to ministers, 82
 Rires, chapel of, 65; school, 103
 Roads under charge of session, 18
 Robb, Alexander, teacher, 103
 Robertson, James, teacher, 34
 — William, quoted, 129
 Rodger, James, 166
 Rollock, Rev. Henry, 75
 Row's *History* quoted, 72, 74
 Russell's *Account* quoted, 129, 130
 Russell, Rev. David, 169
 — family, stained glass window, 86
 Rutherford, Rev. John, 68

SABBATH Schools, 166, 170
 — desecration, 106, 108
 — tipping, 107
 Sandglass in church, 90
 Sandyfield, 25
 School at Rires, 31, 103
 — in Colinsburgh, 32, 154
 — in Kilconquhar, 102
 Schoolmasters of Kilconquhar, 88
 — salaries, 32, 103

Scott's *Apologetical Narration* quoted, 71
 Scots money, 11
 Scott, Rev. Alexander, 165
 — Alexander, brewer, 31, 35, 156
 — John, 176
 — Rev. Thomas, 141
 Scott's *Fasts* quoted, 67, 84
 Scourging by hangman, 116
 Seat rents, 148
 Session clerks of parish, 88
 — in Colinsburgh, 151
 Sharp, Archbishop, 79, 128
 Sheriff small debt court, 58
 Shiells, R., Psalm tunes, 89
 Sibbald's *History* quoted, 21
 Sime, Thomas, teacher, 88
 Sinclair's *Memoirs* quoted, 51
 Small, Rev. Alexander, 66, 85
 Smith, James, weaver, 27
 — John, teacher, 88
 — Rev. J., Newburn, 140
 — Thomas, wright, 31
 Social Meeting, 182
 Solemn League and Covenant, 120
 Soldiers sent to their regiments, 122
 Spons, Rev. Alexander, 67
 — Rev. David, 67
 St Monance disjoined, 67
 Steele, David, coal-carrier, 28
 — William, bellman, 28
 Stipends, 142
 Stocks, the, 115
 Stone coffins found, 60
 Struther's *History* quoted, 159

TEACHERS in Colinsburgh, 32, 154
 — in Kilconquhar, 88
 Tent preaching, 94, 140, 149
 Thane of Fife, 60
 Theft, case of, 112
 Thom, Hugh, cork screw cutter, 29
 — William, clockmaker, 28
 Thomson, James, painter, 176
 Todd, Dr., Colinsburgh, 60, 178
 Tolbooth, the, 17, 63

-
- Town Hall in Colinsburgh, 185
 Turnbull, Rev. James, 170
 Tyrie, William, flax heckler, 33
 URIE, *Court Book* of, quoted, 58
 U.P. Church founded, 135
 VICARS of Kilconquhar, 65
 Volunteer movement, 181
 WATER gate, the, 18
 — supply, 179
 Wawane, William and George, 66
 Weather notices, 38
 White, R., houses, 16, 17, 24
 Wilkie, James, teacher, 88
 Wilson, Rev. Walter, 82
 Witchcraft, 111
 Wodrow's *History* quoted, 79,
 124, 131, 133
 — *MSS.* quoted, 131, 132
 Wood, John, 24, 178, 179
 Wood's *East Neuk of Fife* quoted,
 11, 66, 80
 Wright, Mrs, house, 32

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